REFRAMING EDUCATION

The Partnership Strategy and Public Schools

A Report to Carnegie Corporation of New York

Janice M. Hirota, Ph.D.

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Youth Development Institute

Fund for the City of New York

With the Assistance of New Visions for Public Schools

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Reframing Education: The Partnership Strategy and Public Schools

Partnership & Innovation: New Century High Schools in New York
February 2004

Practicing Partnership: Lever for Reform in Public Schools
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THE PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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FOREWORD

Carnegie Corporation, in 1999, commenced a body of urban school reform work focused on transforming both urban high schools and urban school districts. In 2000, the Corporation launched the planning phase of its national Schools for a New Society initiative, and in 2001, selected seven cities to support in their efforts to transform all their high schools, as well as the way their districts and communities organize and support high schools.

Given the unique scale and complexity of New York City, a different strategy was required. In 2001, Carnegie Corporation, with Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Open Society Institute, granted $30 million to New Visions for Public Schools for the New Century High Schools initiative. Four years later, this initiative to transform low performing high schools into small autonomous schools has opened 75 new high schools in New York City.

Building community capacity to demand and support excellent schools for all students is an essential component of Carnegie Corporation's urban school reform funding priorities. This commitment was recently validated in a poll sponsored by the Corporation in 2005, in which a strong majority of respondents indicated that they did not believe that school districts could change high schools without significant help from a wide range of community partners.

The New Century initiative's distinctive hallmark is its community partnership strategy, bringing together educators and community resource organizations such as youth-serving organizations, cultural and educational institutions, and community-based organizations. Each new school must be a working partnership between secondary educators and at least one community organization or institution. Partnerships between schools and the larger community have existed before, but usually have been at the periphery of school life. Here the challenge has been to forge partnerships that are integral to the operation of the schools. In addition to the more traditional roles of providing support services and extended learning opportunities, the New Century partnerships have sought as well to reframe the method and content of high school education. They have done this by working hand-in-hand with educators to develop new curricular approaches, thematic frameworks, pedagogical practices, personalization strategies and organizational development and management practices.

The New Century High Schools initiative is breaking important new ground with the partnership strategy. Carnegie Corporation has invested in the Youth Development Institute's documentation and analysis of the evolution of the New Century High Schools initiative's partnership strategy to extract the lessons for both

local and national application. Dr. Janice Hirota's richly detailed reports in this volume follow the initiative's developmental trajectory, exploring the dynamics of partnership in both young and more mature small high schools. They offer careful analyses of the dimensions and challenges of partnership in these new schools, as well as valuable lessons about the enormous untapped potential available in our urban communities to improve high schools.

The partnerships described in these reports are works in progress, and will take time to fully develop. Neither side came to the table with prior experience in this kind of integral partnership and both sides have had to struggle against the weight of their standard operating practices and forge new understandings about what high school education should look like and how they can best make that vision a reality. But if we are to assure—as we must—all of our young people a high school education that prepares them for postsecondary education and training, career-building employment in the 21st Century economy, active citizenship in a global democracy, and a healthy and satisfying adult life, we will need to bring to bear the full resources of our communities. The New Century High Schools partnership strategy is a vital contribution to the reinvention of our high schools and the reform of urban schools.

Constancia Warren
Senior Program Officer and Director of Urban High School Initiatives
Carnegie Corporation of New York
August 2005

OVERVIEW

New Visions for Public Schools' New Century High Schools Initiative aims to transform chronically low-performing large high schools (identified by the Department of Education) into campuses of autonomous small schools. The first New Century high schools opened in September 2002; by fall 2004, the initiative had 75 new small schools, serving nearly 12,750 students.

New Century schools strive to unite rigorous academics and personalized supports as critical features of effective education—especially for students who are disengaged from and unprepared for high school-level work. New Visions believes that schools alone cannot fulfill this demanding task. Instead, each New Century school is expected to reflect a working partnership that integrates efforts of Department of Education educators (the school or DoE partner) and staff from a non-profit organization (the organizational partner) in the conceptualization and implementation of the new small schools. This hallmark strategy of school-level partnerships looks to the rich and varied resources of knowledge, experience, opportunities, and skills that such collaborative effort can bring to a school and its students.

Documentation of the New Century Partnership Strategy

Carnegie Corporation of New York is providing support for a three-year documentation study to explore, record, and glean lessons from the translation of the partnership strategy into practice in the new small schools. The Youth Development Institute of the Fund for the City of New York initially conceived and oversees the study, which is being conducted with assistance from New Visions for Public Schools. Dr. Janice M. Hirota, an urban anthropologist, is employing primarily fieldwork methodology to examine the following questions:

- What does the partnership strategy look like in practice?
- How are school and organizational partners conceptualizing, implementing, and supporting their partnerships?
- How are these practices affecting daily life in schools? What are the achievements and challenges?
- What are the critical supports for fostering and helping to sustain such partnerships?

The Volume

The volume *Reframing Education: The Partnership Strategy and Public Schools* contains the first two papers of the documentation study. Although the papers were written as independent pieces, they are joined in this volume to highlight the value of employing a developmental lens in examining the partnerships and their work in New Century schools. The volume aims to make it easy to trace that development. The papers are:

- "Partnership & Innovation: New Century High Schools in New York" (February 2004): The initial paper, which begins on page 11, provides a look at early partnership work at New Visions and in the first cohort of schools that opened in September 2002. This paper first was published and distributed in early 2004.
- "Practicing Partnership: Lever for Reform in Public Schools" (August 2005): The second paper begins on page 43. It follows the developmental trajectory of partnerships, exploring their practices, challenges, and achievements as of the 2004-05 school year. At this point, there are 75 New Century schools in operation, some in their first year and others in their second or third year.

Paper Themes

The papers use the details and particularity of field data as the bases for the development of broad analytic themes that cross-cut schools and partnerships. The initial paper, "Partnership & Innovation," focuses on the following themes:

- The evolving meaning of the partnership concept at New Visions, including a growing focus on the potential of the partnership as different from and greater than the work of schools and of organizations acting individually
- New Visions' supports for school and organizational partners and how these conveyed expectations of the practice of partnership
- The multiple, often unanticipated tasks and pressures that school and organizational partners encounter in opening their schools, at times hindering the ability to develop agreements, processes, and structures to facilitate collaborative work
- Various ways that partnership practices became evident in New Century high schools over the 2002-03 school year.

The second paper, "Lever for Reform," builds on the earlier analyses while also drawing on ongoing fieldwork to explore the following themes:

- Two dynamics that form critical aspects of the context within which partners implement the partnership strategy: the influence of traditional perspectives on the content, processes, and meanings of public school education; and the development over time of the new schools and partnerships—and indeed of the initiative itself.
- Ways that New Century high schools and partnerships vary even as they share a common initiative mission and "critical elements," including small size and guidance by the initiative's ten principles. Such variation grows in part from the initiative's aim to foster innovative thinking about teaching and learning as part of the effort to meet and build on the various strengths, interests, and needs of the city's youth.
- Against this background of commonality, variation, and innovation, the paper explores ways that Department of Education and organizational partners implement their partnerships—their roles, practices, quandaries, and challenges.
- In an analysis of the New Century partnership strategy in terms of the potential sustainability and breadth of the initiative and its reforms, the paper considers some general critiques of education reform efforts and argues that the partnership strategy itself acts as a lever for reform in unanticipated ways.

Some Findings

Partnerships currently range across a broad continuum. Some DoE and organizational partners together have developed effective collaborations that infuse their schools with enriched resources, joint approaches to teaching and learning, professional development, strengthened academics and pedagogy, and youth development principles; others have begun with more limited arenas of joint work and are continuing to expand beyond these; some are stymied by narrow definitions of or limited resources for organizational participation; and a few have dissolved.

Still, across many schools, the collaboration of partners working together—that is, *practicing partnership*—has led, even at this early stage of the initiative, to a variety of new curricular approaches, personalization strategies, out-of-school activities, thematic frameworks, pedagogic practices, and organizational development and management practices. Partnership efforts have also begun making inroads toward systemic change. There has been, for example, an increasing number of regional superintendents' events specifically to recognize and support organizational partners' contributions in the work of their schools.

When fully implemented, the partnership strategy implies essential changes in traditional approaches to school structures, governance, teaching and learning practices, personalization approaches, and social supports. In order to enact these broad-stroke aims, educators on the ground—the DoE *and* organizational staff

members who work in the schools—must devise new ways of thinking about, defining, and practicing their roles. Enacting school-level partnerships requires a *reframing of the methods and content—that is, the means and meaning – of high school education.* DoE and organizational partners, along with other key initiative participants, face the challenges and potentials of defining, negotiating, and aligning their roles, relationships, and responsibilities as they seek to create—through their everyday aims and tasks—the structures, processes, and shared perspectives that underpin their joint work and their schools. This reframing, an essential aspect of thoroughgoing reform, sheds light on the reach of initiative efforts to effect change in multiple school arenas and the scope and sustainability of those changes.

PARTNERSHIP & INNOVATION

NEW CENTURY HIGH SCHOOLS IN NEW YORK

February 2004

PARTNERSHIP & INNOVATION
NEW CENTURY HIGH SCHOOLS IN NEW YORK

In September 2002, 17 New Century high schools opened their doors to students as part of an ambitious, citywide initiative to make the high school experience relevant, engaging, and productive for New York City youth. Deliberately sited in Department of Education-designated low-performing high schools, these schools enroll students who are often unengaged in and unprepared for high school-level work. A core team provides oversight of the initiative and ensures ongoing support and involvement of key stakeholders. The team includes the New York City Department of Education (DoE), the United Federation of Teachers, the Council of Supervisors & Administrators, New Visions for Public Schools (New Visions), and the supporting foundations—Carnegie Corporation of New York, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and Open Society Institute. This governance structure reflects the strong political and financial support that the New Century High Schools Initiative enjoys, with initial funding of more than $30 million dollars from the three foundations. New Visions has managed the initiative since its launching in 2001.

The initiative continues to grow at a rapid pace. In fall 2003, new developments included: the opening of 24 new schools, for a total of 41 New Century high schools in operation; further funding in the amount of more than $29 million from the Gates Foundation for development of 30 additional new schools over two years; and statements from both the mayor and schools chancellor describing small schools as an important component of the broader effort to reform the New York City public school system.

This is the first of a series of papers based on a documentation study of the implementation of the New Century high schools. In particular, the study is examining how a central NCHS strategy—school-level partnerships between DoE staff and non-school organizations—is being enacted as partners work to create and lead each of the new small schools.

BACKGROUND

The New Century High Schools Initiative unites three, often unconnected strands of school reform efforts, interweaving these strands in an extensive effort to transform large, centralized high schools into small schools. The first strand emphasizes small school environments to promote strong, individualized academic and social supports for students. This includes innovative curricular approaches to ignite

student interest, ongoing assessments of learning and teaching, close student-adult relationships, and heightened peer interaction within a safe, comfortable, and stimulating setting. The second strand highlights work to create and support school-level partnerships between the DoE ("school") staff, mainly teachers and principals, and staff of external organizations to co-design, -implement, and -operate the new small schools. The third strand involves efforts to create region-level and citywide structural change to help foster and sustain reform in schools throughout the system.

Each of the three strands plays a vital role in the NCHS design, much like the legs of a three-legged stool. In many ways, however, it is the concept of a partnership of equals, with the shared responsibility to create, lead, and maintain each school, which distinguishes the NCHS initiative from other small school reform or transformation efforts.[1]

Documentation Study of Community-School Partnerships

As the partnership notion moved into action in the initial cohort of New Century schools, staff at the Youth Development Institute at the Fund for the City of New York (YDI), in collaboration with New Visions, recognized the importance of documenting how school and organizational partners develop as teams and establish their schools. With support from Carnegie Corporation of New York, YDI, a major technical assistance provider for NCHS partnerships, contracted for the documentation study.

The study is a three-year exploration of the implementation and development of the second strand of the initiative: the partnerships between school-based educators and organizational staff. The study, which primarily employs fieldwork methodology,[2] asks: How do NCHS partnerships actually unfold in the schools?

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[1] A number of initiatives and reform movements play variations on small schools, including, for example, the charter school movement, the schools as centers of communities movement, and New Visions Schools, but none has mandated school-level partnerships that are charged with joint responsibility for creating and leading the schools. Carnegie Corporation's Schools for a New Society initiative employs a strong partnership strategy with its small schools, but the focus there is to develop strong partnerships at the system/district level.

[2] Fieldwork consists mainly of semi-structured, open-ended interviews with principal actors in selected partnerships and observations of central events, such as meetings, program activities, and trainings. Fieldwork for the paper began in mid-February 2003, into the first year of the operation of New Century high schools, and continued through September 2003. During this 8-month period, I conducted two levels of data collection. With the agreement of school and organizational partners, I carried out in-depth fieldwork at the Bronx Guild and Mott Haven Village Preparatory High School, two schools in the Bronx that New Visions and YDI identified as strong candidates for the study. In addition, throughout this period, I interviewed staff from New Visions, YDI, and the then small schools office of the Bronx high schools superintendency; interacted informally with a number of school and organizational partners; participated in New Visions meetings regarding partnership support and development; and reviewed materials generated by various groups involved in enacting the initiative. I also attended meetings and workshops for partners. Sometimes these gatherings brought together members of half the partnership equation (e.g., the Bronx high schools superintendency's small schools principals' meetings or the initial New Visions network meetings for organizational partners). Particularly during year 1, organizational partners felt the need at times to meet with each other, and asked New Visions to sponsor organizations-only meetings; this is discussed further in the paper. At other times, meetings included all partners (e.g., YDI's advisory workshops, the Bronx high schools superintendency's lunch meetings focusing on particular topics such as English Language Learners in small schools, and New Visions' principal-partner meetings, small schools retreats, and other initiative-wide events). School and/or organizational staff members took part in such gatherings as presenters, panelists, and active participants in small group discussions. These fieldwork venues together provide a textured view of the complexities, potentials, and challenges of the partnership strategy and how it is being enacted in schools. The researcher, a trained anthropologist, is conducting both the data collection and the data analysis.

Are school and organizational staff able to translate the concept of partnership into meaningful practice? What do these partnerships look like, and how do they operate? What are the critical supports for fostering and helping to sustain such partnerships?

Working Paper I

This first paper attempts to capture, in broad strokes: the early evolution of the NCHS partnership strategy; ways New Visions has conveyed the meaning of the strategy to school and organizational partners; and initial partnership practices and challenges in the schools.

As the research proceeded, it became clear that the partnership *strategy* and actual partnership *practices* in schools are interlocking pieces of the initiative, often operating in dynamic tension. The strategy's assumptions, priorities, and aims comprise a major context for understanding how partnership is enacted in schools and in larger communities. At the same time, partners' efforts to establish their schools help shape the meaning of the strategy and the supports for its implementation. Within short-term frameworks, strategy and practice have sometimes been in synch with each other, and at other times, at variance. Within longer timeframes, however, the dynamic interaction between strategy and practice has meant an evolution of each as participants in both realms influence the growth and perspectives of each other.

School creation is hard work. The study is learning about partnerships as partners are in the midst of meeting the multiple demands of building and running schools, engaging and teaching students, solving numerous logistical snags, and developing themselves and their staffs in the ways of effective small schools *and* of collaborative work. At the same time, New Visions staff and DoE district (later regional) administrators are supporting the creation of new small schools at a greater scale and faster pace than ever before attempted in New York City. They are working to establish new definitions of teaching and of learning, to develop the theoretical framework and applied dimensions of the partnership strategy, and to create accepted practice and policy regarding implementation of the initiative's principles, all within the politically-tinged arena of systemic change and reform.

This is meant as a working paper for audiences close to the NCHS work: New Visions and YDI, the organizations deeply engaged in helping develop and support partnerships; Carnegie Corporation of New York, supporter of the documentation work; staff of the former Bronx high schools superintendency's small schools office, who worked closely, from the earliest planning stages through implementation, with the New Century high schools in the Bronx; and New Century partners themselves. Why a "working paper"? First, working papers are part of the process of learning

about partnership. They aim to stimulate reflection and discussion among the range of participants about the concept and practice of partnership, including feedback that critiques, elaborates, corrects, and extends the analysis. Second, the paper describes a study in progress; it is the first of several to be produced over three years of observing and interacting with the initiative. Third, later publications, meant for broader public release, will cull and articulate lessons learned about New Century partnerships, including reactions to the working papers. Given this paper's purpose and audiences, it assumes that readers have a basic understanding of the NCHS initiative and its partnership strategy.

The paper is built around analytic themes drawn from the field data and uses illustrative examples as appropriate. The paper falls into three substantive sections. "The Partnership Strategy" (section II) and "Supporting Partnerships" (section III) flesh out the context for the partnership work. "The Partnership Strategy" discusses the development of partnership as an idea and strategy (pages 14-21). "Supporting Partnerships" outlines the kinds of supports and assistance provided by New Visions and YDI for partners, both school and organizational, to convey the concept of partnership (pages 21-27). Within this context, "Practicing Partnership" (section IV) looks at how partnership is actually practiced and begins to explore the various roles of partners, relevant organizational attributes, and development of partnerships (pages 27-37). Future papers will draw on this early thematic exploration.

THE PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY

The New Century High Schools Initiative attempts fundamental shifts in the conception, practice, and policies of high school education in one of the largest school systems in the nation. The overarching goal is to improve student outcomes across a range of arenas—academic, civic, social, and personal—thereby reflecting more effective teaching and learning. The initiative argues that community partners will increase the availability and improve the quality of critical opportunities and supports for young people in small schools. The joint resources of schools and organizations working together will change high school education in constructive, creative, and meaningful ways. The partnership strategy at the core of the initiative aims to provide a *means* to achieving solid outcomes in these arenas. Moreover, in realizing vital school-community links and joint commitment to educating youth, the strategy aims to signal an important initiative *result*. Since 2001, New Visions has been sharpening and focusing the strategy, based on youth development research and the experiences of early initiative planning and implementation. This program development work has encountered ongoing challenge because of the rapid pace of new school creation as well as the uniqueness of the venture.

Before getting into the evolution of the partnership strategy, however, one should note a seemingly simple but continuing quandary: What to call the "non-school" partner? The new school is to be the product of the partnership, but one partner comes with the legitimacy of traditional roles in schools. It is important that the title for the organizational partner helps evoke an equal stake and role in the partnership—instead of the separateness implied in such terms as "external," "non-school," "lead organization," indicating the role as fiscal agent for initiative funds, or simply "partner," as distinguished from the school. "Community partner" has been a title from the start but ran into the snag that all partners are not community-based organizations or, indeed, located in the community or even borough of the school. Nor are they meant to be. In part, "community" here signifies the larger "non-school" community and highlights two notions. First, that all stakeholders are responsible for the education of the city's youth, and second, that school and "community" partners can break the isolation that traditionally has been part of schools and the education process. The term "community," however, can convey other connotations, raising expectations and confusion, especially as community engagement and community organizing are increasingly approaches to achieving school reform.

The title dilemma is significant for three reasons. First, it reflects the innovative nature of the partnership notion. Second, the dilemma encapsulates, in a shorthand way, the challenges of carrying out the new roles and structures that partnership implies. Third, the dilemma suggests the shifts in perspective and practice that are key to partners—both DoE and organizations—working together to create a new institutional entity. The challenge is not only *capturing* new relationships with old language, but of *creating* new relationships out of old paradigms. In this paper and more generally, I use the term "organizational partner" as a neutral, descriptive, if inelegant, term.

The Evolving Partnership Strategy

The NCHS partnership strategy is akin to but different from previous working relationships between schools and organizations. As in earlier configurations, organizations are sources of expertise, practice, and resources that can complement school offerings. The partnership strategy, however, eschews the traditional limits that restrict organizations to peripheral roles in out-of-school hours or to service provision, such as social supports or remedial learning. These are roles and services that might complement but generally do not affect the teaching and learning work that occurs during the school day. Instead, the NCHS strategy, as it has evolved, squarely emphasizes an integrated work relationship between partners that results in the joint development, implementation, and leadership of a new school and the shared responsibility for student learning.

From the beginning, New Visions staff acknowledged and worked with the innovative nature of the partnership strategy. The cutting-edge aspect has impelled, at times, a scramble to meet rapidly developing challenges, define changing parameters, and look for ways to support partners as they move into new territory. At the same time, the strategy provides New Visions and YDI staff with a creative opportunity. Partnerships can be entry points into fundamentally re-conceptualizing the meaning of a "quality high school education."

Since spring 2001, with the issuance of the first Request for Proposals (RFP) for NCHS planning grants, and still ongoing, the partnership strategy has been evolving. During the 30-month period between spring 2001 and fall 2003, two cohorts of school teams have gone through planning phases, submitted proposals, and opened New Century schools.[3] Taking an overall view of this period, two things stand out about the strategy. First, there has been a continuous core of publicly articulated themes and beliefs about the value of partnerships to the transformation of high school education in New York City. Second, New Visions has gleaned and then used its experiences to refine the notion of partnerships, developing greater clarity about the roles and expectations of DoE and organizational staffs, their partnerships, and the schools they create. As a backdrop to exploring how partnerships are enacted in the creation and maintenance of New Century high schools, it is useful to consider briefly (1) the ongoing core assumptions and expectations of partnerships and (2) major stages of development of the strategy.

Continuing Core Tenets of the Partnership Strategy

Although there have been shifts in emphases and clarity of articulation, the continuous beliefs include the following:

- ***Partnership is an essential part of the NCHS initiative.*** Schools alone cannot provide quality education, particularly for youth who have been underserved, underachieving, and turned off of school. Organizations alone cannot provide quality education either. However, schools and organizations together can create quality schools.
- ***At the school level, partnership means collaboration*** between Department of Education staff (teachers, principal, counselors, and others) and organizational staff.
- ***The organizational partner can be from any area,*** including institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, cultural institutions, social service providers, youth development organizations, and so forth.

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[3] The paper relies on initiative-generated documents and interviewees' memories of the NCHS work in order to flesh out the period from the start of the initiative in 2001 through early 2002, when fieldwork began.

- ***The organizational partner may play a variety of roles in schools,*** including provider of "direct services to students and [their] families," supporter of the "curriculum and pedagogy of the school," and source of the necessary "political will and organization to… stretch the realm of [educational] possibility."[4]
- ***There are many different ways of structuring the partnership,*** for example, creating co-leadership approaches, or bringing in multiple organizational partners, or having a principal candidate who is identified by the organizational partner, or distinguishing particular areas in which each partner works.
- ***The organizational partner serves as the fiscal agent for the initiative funds.*** This was a strategic decision to help create leverage for the organizational partner, who also receives some initiative support for its work in the school.

Phases of Development of the Partnership Strategy. Between mid-2001 and early fall 2003, three phases in the development of the partnership concept stand out. These are not sharply defined periods, but, instead, phases that built on each other, as initiative staff incorporated their experiences and insights.

> ***Phase 1: An early focus on partnerships as a means for simultaneously establishing deep systemic roots, transforming existing large high schools into campuses of multiple small schools, and creating new individual schools.*** The first planning grant RFP, issued in spring 2001, envisioned two different levels of partnerships. At the broadest level, the RFP required the formation of "district-community" collaborations, defined as collaborations between a school district or high schools superintendency with "outside education stakeholders."[5] At this broad level, collaboration had two manifestations. One kind of partnership, between a district and an organizational partner, aimed at transforming an entire large high school into several small schools. This route was attempted in Brooklyn and not at all in the Bronx. The second kind of partnership, between a superintendency and an organizational partner, meant to act as a funnel for engaging and assisting school-based education and organizational staffs to work at more local levels, "creat[ing] new small high schools or expand[ing] existing schools to include high school grades." Moreover, the charge to organizational partners seemed to extend beyond school creation. The initial RFP also specifies that "external partners": (1) discuss how they will help solve "problems identified by the district and school," such as students' health and counseling needs or the lack of

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[4] Agenda for the November 8, 2001, meeting "Open Discussion for Interested Community Based Organizations, Cultural Institutions, Colleges and Businesses," hosted by the South Bronx Churches for the Bronx New Century High School Initiative, p 2.

[5] New Visions for Public Schools, Request for Proposals for Planning Grant Applications, spring 2001, p. 6.

appropriate training for teachers; (2) describe how they "will contribute to the overall mission" of the new school; and (3) commit to supporting needed changes "with the political will required to sustain the effort…."[6]

Neither the concept of partnership as a vehicle for total large school transformation nor as a funnel for engaging partners in small school creation has continued. By the third round of planning, the emphasis was squarely on the efforts of school and organizational staffs, working in teams, engaged in individual small school creation.

Phase 2: Increased highlighting of school-level partnerships; multiple arenas in which organizational partners might work; and ways New Visions and YDI might support organizational partners and their adoption of significant NCHS roles. In early 2002, there was growing recognition that organizational partners needed clarity about and support for their roles as they moved toward implementation of the first cohort of new schools. In addition, organizations looked for indications that their involvement as partners would be long-term and sustained, not only in terms of financial support but in terms of school leadership support that would survive the kind of turnover endemic to the school system. In response to organizations' concerns, New Visions explored the possibility of developing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between organizational and school partners. The MOU was seen as a possible means for providing organizational partners with the legitimacy and structural support necessary to gain some equity of authority in their relationships with school partners. "There is a big difference between rules that 'permit' [organizational partners'] involvement as opposed to 'requiring' their involvement."[7]

At issue was discovering ways to make two partners into a viable, sustainable working partnership. This demanded a redefining of roles and responsibilities on both sides. In addition to exploring the MOU possibility, New Visions used other venues to promote such redefinition. For example, the "Vision of Partnership" presentation at a mid-summer 2002 meeting for both school and organizational partners touched on a wide range of partnership roles for organizations, most broadly as co-creators of schools, sharing common visions and missions with their school partners. Other arenas included participation in teaching and learning (e.g., developing curricula and professional development), daily operations of the school, engaging students, families, and communities in schools, providing new opportunities and resources, and shaping the school environment.

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[6] New Visions for Public Schools, "Request for Proposals for Planning Grant Applications," spring 2001, pg. 7.

[7] Private summary notes from February 2001 meetings that included New Visions and organizational partners.

Ultimately, the MOU route was not pursued. Instead, as the partnership teams moved closer to opening new schools in the fall 2002, some of the concepts and language were taken out of the MOU's legal framework and incorporated into a specific section of the implementation plan that asked partners to discuss how they intended to enact their partnerships. The aim was to stimulate further discussion on and clarification of roles and expectations of both partners; development of policies and practices that support "partners' joint commitment to and responsibility for implementing the school design;" and creation of a "written record of understanding."[8]

Overall, the MOU issue points out just how radical the NCHS initiative is in its demand for rethinking the shape, content, and means of educating youth. The need to rethink roles, responsibilities, and sustainability remain critical concerns for the initiative.

During this phase, New Visions and YDI also began helping organizational partners articulate assets that could be valuable in educational settings, in part laying a foundation to strengthen credibility for their participation in schools. The exercise also meant to identify potential points—what some call "connecting points"—through which organizational partners could enter into schools and the educational process. YDI writes:

> We recognize that [organizational] partners bring a wide range of assets that can help in the classroom, non-school hours and in building connections to the community…. We would like to be sure to identify these, and help communicate them. NCHS is an opportunity to strengthen the external partner contribution so that they are not involved just in addressing the problems and pathologies that emerge in schools—a traditional role for many, such as student behavior issues—but are building learning opportunities and creating more positive opportunities for youth.[9]

Increasingly, New Visions moved more toward framing the work of both partners as developing the whole child, thereby aiming to place students, instead of schools, at the center of discussion. The question slowly became: What are the needs, interests, and strengths of students that partners together—school and organization—can meet, engage, and utilize in the education process? A mid-2002 working memo on partnerships says: "Young people, families and communities are essential partners in creating and building new kinds of educational settings. Young people are at the center of these [NCHS] efforts…. [Partnerships] entail close working relationships, joining of assets and sharing of responsibility. These efforts will be designed

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[8] New Visions for Public Schools, "Implementation Plans," June 2002, p. 2.

[9] Youth Development Institute, internal memorandum "Questions for Community Organization Leaders," June 14, 2002, p. 1.

to create kinds of learning opportunities that address the full richness of adolescent interests, strengths and needs."[10]

> ***Phase 3: Emphasis on the "integration" of both partners' efforts in major realms of school life.*** These realms include curriculum, teaching and learning, school environment, and student assessment. A widely-circulated draft document, "A Vision of Partnerships," clearly outlines the kinds and degrees of integrated effort expected of partnerships: "To truly meet the needs of all high school students, we must re-envision not simply the roles partner organizations play but the nature of school-community partnerships themselves. Educators and other groups in the community…. must share responsibility for student success." In the same document, guiding principles for partnerships include the following:
>
> - All partners are accountable for student success.
> - The work of all partners is integrated into every aspect of the school's design, development and operation.
> - The work of all partners has a direct impact on teaching and learning: they help students grow intellectually, personally and socially.
> - Partnerships work to change relationships between schools, the community and the school system as a whole.[11]

Subsequent New Visions' tools and report formats stress the integration of partners' work with each other and in the school. For example, the "Tool for Partner Involvement," distributed to school and organizational participants in the 2003 New Visions Summer Institute, asks respondents to fill in information about their partners on questions such as: "Thinking about the [summer institute] class you are taking, describe how your partner might work with you to plan work with students; work in the classroom; work with students outside the classroom—in projects that take place in the field; assess work with students."[12] Such questions convey the assumption that partners regularly work together, engage in core education endeavors, and know each others' strengths well enough to anticipate the shape of future joint efforts. The format of the "Partnership-Planning Report" follows the same strategy, asking, for example, in the area of teaching and learning:

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[10] Youth Development Institute, internal "Mission Statement on Partnerships" summarizing strategy discussions with New Visions for Public Schools, May 2002.

[11] New Visions for Public Schools, "New Century High Schools: A Vision of Partnerships," Draft, May 2003.

[12] New Visions for Public Schools, "Tools for Partner Involvement," July 2003.

- What opportunities does the community partner have to participate in professional development for DoE instructors and for DoE instructors to participate in the professional development opportunities of the community partner?
- What opportunities does the community partner staff have to participate in classroom-based learning activities and for DoE staff to participate in learning activities initiated by the community partner?[13]

In brief, several significant developments in the partnership strategy occurred during the approximately two-year period under review (mid-2001–September 2003). These include the shift of the center of focus from schools to students and the educational process; a growing emphasis on the necessary and legitimate role of organizations as central to rethinking schools as educational arenas for youth; the deliberate, shared emphasis on academic rigor and social support as the joint pillars of the new schools; and the spoken expectation that partners will work together in all areas of the school, with improved student outcomes as the ultimate justification of the partnership strategy. An important reflection of these shifts occurred during the engagement of potential partners for the third cohort of new schools (2004-05). Here, New Visions was more intentional and systematic in the recruitment and preparation of potential organizational partners. New Visions and staff of the Regional Offices of Small Schools (ROSS) worked together to support the recruiting, engaging, training, and guiding of potential school and organizational partners in the development of concept paper applications for planning grants. This approach highlights and makes visible (1) the leadership role of New Visions and (2) the joint work of New Visions and the small schools offices in five of the participating school system regions.

SUPPORTING PARTNERSHIPS

The partnership support provided by New Visions, YDI, and the then Office of the Bronx High Schools Superintendent, particularly the small schools staff, during the 2002-03 school year also reflects a similar evolutionary path.

In this context, and before looking at some of the supports, it is useful to recall that the deep reform introduced by the NCHS initiative has been taking place during a period of substantial, centrally-conceived transformation—bureaucratic, political, curricular, tactical, and conceptual—throughout the school system,

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[13] New Visions for Public Schools, "New Century High School Initiative: Partnership-Planning Report," July 1, 2003, p. 2.

from elementary through secondary grades and across all geographic areas of the city. Although this systemic transformation did not go into implementation until mid-2003, planning, announced changes, rumors of change, and feelings of uncertainty began much earlier. Perhaps the changes with the most immediate effect on the NCHS initiative have been the transformation and consolidation of the former 32 school districts into ten regions and the elimination of the high schools superintendencies. The first New Visions planning and implementation grants, for schools opening in 2002, were predicated on partnerships between school districts or superintendencies and organizational partners. These schools continue to operate but, especially for the Bronx high schools, no longer fall within the same bureaucratic unit in the school system: instead of being part of a network within the Bronx High Schools Superintendency, they now fall across three different regions. Originally, the Office of the Bronx High Schools Superintendent's small schools office had served and helped guide these new high schools.

When the Department of Education (formerly the Board of Education) made no provisions for small school offices within the new regions, New Visions helped create and now supports such staff within the six regions with low-performing high schools targeted for redesign.[14] Specifically, New Visions is funding, for a limited time, positions in each of the six regions that focus on partnerships and community engagement and on small schools development. In each region, these staff members constitute a "Regional Office of Small Schools" (ROSS), are accountable to both New Visions and the office of the regional superintendent, work closely with regional staff and the regional superintendent, and are charged with supporting the emerging new schools. New Visions' goal is to build regional commitment to the new schools and to ensure school system capacity to support and develop the new schools.

A brief review of some of the partnership supports helps trace their overall path of development. Some examples of the supports include the following:

> ***Bronx school district's work in 2001.*** The Office of Bronx High Schools created a "Professional/Proposal Development Workshop" to help develop teams toward the opening of the first cohort of New Century high schools in fall 2002. The workshop, comprised of a series of weekly informational sessions on the requirements and demands of creating and operating new schools, covered such topics as "Creating a School Mission and Educational Philosophy," "Staff Development and Evaluation," and "Setting Student Assessment Standards and Processes." During the series, interested organizations, parents, students, community residents, and

[14] The six regions with New Visions supported small school staffs are: 1 and 2 (both in the Bronx), 4, 5, and 6 (all three in Brooklyn), and 9 (Manhattan and South Bronx).

Board of Education teachers and principals were able to network and form planning teams. The series aimed most immediately to prepare teams to write concept papers and full school proposals in pursuit of planning and implementation grants, respectively. In the longer-term, the aim was to build the groundwork for small school creation and operation.

Meetings for organizational partners. During fall 2002, with the opening of the first cohort of New Century high schools, New Visions sponsored various gatherings at the request of organizational partners so they could meet without their school partners. Organizational partners wanted to share strategies and air difficulties and concerns. For example, the Bronx Steering Committee meetings, co-facilitated by New Visions and the Bronx High Schools Superintendent's small schools office, provided the arena for organizational partners to discuss basic school-related issues such as student safety. Organizational partners also wanted meetings devoted to the possibility of establishing a memorandum of understanding, discussed earlier. Ongoing themes in all these organizational-partners-only meetings included their efforts to gain legitimacy as full partners in the schools and explorations of ways to clarify and support their roles.

New Visions' "Network Meetings." New Visions has sponsored network meetings from the first year of NCHS implementation. These meetings have always emphasized networking, aiming not only to create a time, place, and hospitable atmosphere in which colleagues could meet and share mutual interests, but also to foster an active network of NCHS participants. Organizational partners generally host the meetings in their facilities. Typically, partners make presentations, although occasionally there is an outside speaker. Recently, the meetings have included small group discussions around school issues or mini-workshops on topics such as building literacy or tapping into resources.

The concept of "network" has evolved with time and experience. In fall 2002, with the opening of the first cohort of new schools, New Visions held "Community Partners Network Meetings," arenas in which organizational partners could meet, share strategies and ideas, and discuss issues. For example, at the January 2003 network meeting, Good Shepherd Services, the organizational partner at South Brooklyn Community High School, gave a presentation on the school's organizational structures and how these support partnership.

By spring 2003, the concept of "network" had evolved to include principals along with organizational leaders. The first "Principals-Partners Network Meeting" occurred in April at the Bronx Museum of Art. New Visions opened the event by saying:

> We are excited to have both partners and school leaders here this evening at this meeting. We realize how important it is to create as many opportunities as possible for the partners and principals to come together and discuss the issues related to their partnerships and schools.[15]

The opening remarks articulated the expectation that organizational partners be fully integrated into their schools and into the pursuit of new learning opportunities and personalized educational experiences for young people. The school and organizational partners from three schools—Bronx International High School, Discovery High School, and Mott Haven Village Preparatory High School—presented strategies and practices of their partnership work in classrooms, bridge programs to acclimate in-coming ninth-grade students, and governance of their schools.

This first meeting broadened the focus from the organizational partner to an emphasis on the partnership between school and organizational partners. Since then, New Visions has held Principals-Partners Network Meetings on a quarterly basis. The aim has been to foster discussion and problem-solving between partners, promote networking among partnerships, and strengthen the broad and growing network created through partners' shared commitment, work, and challenges.

Asset mapping. New Visions' strategy of asset mapping was designed with a number of aims in mind: to help build relationships between New Visions staff and organizational partners; foster organizational legitimacy and confidence in undertaking full partnership roles; and perhaps most vital, pushing the thinking of organizational partners—and by extension, the thinking of the partnerships—about the definitions and practices of high school education. Most directly, the strategy aims to assist organizational partners in (1) thinking intentionally about and articulating their capacities, experiences, and knowledge within the framework of creating and operating the new schools and (2) identifying potential entry points for their work in the new schools. Such points of entry might include, for example, a youth development perspective, specific programs and supports, expertise at creating and maintaining organizational structures and processes, and experience in engaging familial, community, and foundation support.

YDI's "Literacy Dialogues." In many ways, the creation of the "literacy dialogues" by YDI and the City University of New York, in cooperation with New Visions, was a watershed point in NCHS technical assistance. The dialogues, which began in March 2003, moved the assistance focus to partnership teams—partners together—working on a concrete task related to teaching and learning, an area that traditionally has

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[15] New Visions for Public Schools, Minutes from the Principals-Partners Network Meeting, April 1, 2003.

offered few entry points for the involvement of non-school entities. The dialogues, a series of meetings on challenges of and strategies for youth literacy, culminated in an evening of presentations in which each team described its literacy project and how it had been implemented. Audience participants included the then Board of Education, New Visions, and foundation staffs.

In terms of partnership dynamics, the dialogues provided support focused on an issue—development of student literacy—that all involved in NCHS agree is critical to the success of students, the schools, the partnerships, and the initiative. The structure of the dialogues framed the technical assistance in a new way, joining the concept of partnership to concrete work at the core of the school. The dialogues created a neutral venue, both an arena and time, in which partners could work as professionals to develop a specific new approach to a difficult and serious educational challenge. Participants appreciated that they *worked* together, instead of *talking* about working together. As YDI looked to developing the series for the 2003-04 school year, the issue of institutionalizing the team approach to literacy, perhaps through the involvement of principals and organizational leaders, became a prime concern.

New Visions' "Support Sessions for Concept Paper Preparation." In the early fall 2003, New Visions structured and led seven sessions that presented the NCHS initiative to potential partners—both DoE educators and organizational staff members—who would form the third cohort of new schools. New Visions framed the multi-week series as professional development, the initial stage in creating new assumptions about and expectations for high school education and in encouraging potential partners to engage in open and creative exploration of approaches and structures. The first meeting of the series included an overview of the concept and role of partnership, highlighting the centrality of the strategy in the initiative and expectations for an integrated approach to teaching and learning in each school. The series also included such topics as school culture and curriculum as well as DoE regulations and assessment requirements. A pivotal aspect involved networking so attendees could meet, identify kindred interests, and form school-organization teams. The series culminated in 109 team concepts for new schools. Based on these concepts, each regional core team made recommendations regarding schools proposed for its region to the DoE regional office, which, in turn, made the final decisions for awarding planning grants.[16] Across the six regions with large schools targeted for transformation, the offices made grants to a total of 57 teams, with two additional grants to be decided by year's end.

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[16] The papers went through several levels of appraisal. Initially, staff from the appropriate Regional Office of Small Schools and New Visions read the submissions and sent their recommendations to the relevant Regional Core Team. Team members generally included representatives from the regional office, local instructional superintendent, United Federation of Teachers, Council of Supervisory Administrators, parents, and organizational partners. Teams read and assessed the proposals and sent their recommendations to the DoE regional office, which made the final decisions.

The fall 2003 support sessions departed from the original 2001 Bronx High Schools Superintendent's series in a number of ways. First, as discussed above, during summer 2003, New Visions helped create and provided support for the six regional offices of small schools. The ROSS staff aimed to play similar although extended roles originally undertaken by the Bronx High Schools superintendency during the first two years of the initiative. New Visions staff, now organized by regions to match the new school system structure, and small schools staff housed in regional offices together conducted the support sessions. Second, New Visions and ROSS staff members together emphasized the partnership strategy of the initiative in a variety of ways, for example, in discussing the role of advisories or family groups in schools.[17] As in the 2001 meetings, the series process served as a venue in which DoE staff and staff from potential organizational partners could network in order to identify and connect as partners. Third, New Visions framed the series as professional development, aiming to foster the habits of mind and structural underpinnings to develop new small schools through partnerships. Fourth, New Visions highlighted the interlocking areas of academic rigor and social supports as the essential means for fostering the development of literate, capable youth engaged in their own growth.

In addition, New Visions could now draw on the experiences of school and organizational partners working in existing New Century high schools. At an October citywide partnership meeting for potential partners, organizational partners from three operating schools helped flesh out the theory of the partnership strategy, lending their insights on the demands and challenges of creating and operating the new schools. Some of these challenges included overcoming the skepticism of organizational boards about the initiative, unexpected demands on organizational resources, difficulties in carrying out fiscal agent responsibilities regarding initiative funds, and the ongoing task of creating structures of partnership, such as lines of communication and decision-making processes. The initiative had moved into a new phase as it could now engage practitioners to help initiate potential newcomers with on-the-ground insights into the challenges and rewards of new school creation.

In a general sense, assistance to initiatives and/or projects frequently aims to meet multiple, often overlapping ends. In the NCHS initiative, examples of assistance that provide support in diverse ways include:

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[17] The term "advisory" refers to a program of regularly occurring meetings of students with an adult in the school; in New Century schools, these meetings are generally advisory classes. The primary aim of advisory, sometimes also called "family group," is to foster individuals' awareness of self and others, promote group participation, and build relationships and a sense of community. Advisories often have other purposes as well, such as creating high expectations.

- ***Meeting needs of the schools within the context of partnership.*** For example, sponsoring the Literacy Dialogues to enhance the ability of partnership teams to meet students' literacy needs, but at the same time, strengthening the role of organizational partners in teaching and learning by drawing on organizations' expertise and youth development perspectives.
- ***Building organizations' awareness of their skills and knowledge so they can intentionally employ those skills in their schools.*** For example, engaging organizational partners in asset mapping exercises and at the same time furthering the partnership strategy in order to strengthen schools' educational process.
- ***Developing capacity and new ways of thinking within partners and within the school system more generally.*** For example, seeding small school and partnership strategies among central and regional DoE staff, community-based and citywide organizations, parents, students, and community residents, and other key stakeholders, thereby promoting the institutionalization and sustainability of effective new high schools.

V PRACTICING PARTNERSHIP

Unlike the development of the partnership strategy and implementation supports, to date no clear path or set of paths have become evident for the ways partnership is practiced and matures. There are beginning to emerge, however, some preliminary themes that characterize NCHS partnerships and their work. At the same time, partnerships use their various strategies to undertake common work and challenges. Some of these variations and commonalities are discussed below.

Range and Diversity of Partnerships

Range and diversity are important hallmarks of NCHS partnerships—in partner characteristics, partnership histories, and partnership practices, all discussed below.

Diversity Among Partners

Areas of expertise and focus. Organizational partners bring great diversity in expertise and interests, a strength that was expected but is still striking. For example, organizations bring to their schools: expertise in the arts, drawing on theater groups, studio arts, musicians, and museums and galleries; research and historical perspectives, including archival work; community-based skills, concerns, and legitimacy, gained from their experiences as settlement houses and community organizing groups; knowledge and skills of service provision, including hospitals and social

service centers; youth development expertise that supports the engagement of youth and development of environments that are safe, supportive, personal, and inviting; and access to the world of higher education. School partners also bring particular foci, for example, Bronx International High School's focus on students who are recent immigrants.

Size and venue. Organizational partners range in size and venue, from community based organizations working in particular neighborhoods to borough-wide groups to citywide organizations to out-of-state institutions. Some organizational partners have national status or are part of national organizations or networks. (Examples are, respectively, South Bronx Churches and Mosholu Montefiore Community Center; Bronx Museum of the Arts and Brooklyn Botanic Garden; Lehman College and Roundabout Theatre Company; the University of Vermont; Lincoln Center Institute, NYC Outward Bound Center, and YMCA of Greater New York.)

Experience in small school creation. Many organizational partners come with deep experience with the school system, having worked either in schools (such as Outward Bound, East Side House Settlement, and the University of Vermont) or in after-school programs. Others are new to the arena of the public education system. A few organizational partners, such as The Gateway Institute for Pre-College Education, Good Shepherd Services, South Bronx Churches, and The Urban Assembly, Inc., come with histories in developing and implementing new, small schools or school programs.

Target population. All New Century high schools are located in high poverty areas of the city, and many organizational and school partners bring experience working with underserved, underachieving students. In addition, a few partners and partnerships focus on particular segments of this student population, such as students with high truancy records in high school (Good Shepherd Services and South Brooklyn Community High School) and court-involved youth (Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services and Community Prep High School).

Variations in Partnership Histories

School partner impetus. Some new schools are based on plans that were essentially developed by DoE staff. The plan for The Bronx Guild, for example, draws heavily on the vision and experiences of the principal and the teachers who made up the first year faculty. This team then selected the organizational partner for the school.

Organizational partner impetus. Other schools, such as the Mott Haven Village Preparatory High School, began with strong impetus from the organizational partner, East Side House Settlement, which took the lead in building the planning team, developing the school plan, and identifying a candidate for the principalship.

Already established schools. A few schools, such as Bronx International High School and South Brooklyn Community High School, grew out of already established schools or school programs. Bronx International High School, which accepts only immigrant youth, is modeled on the plan developed in the Queens International High School. The school was a year old when it joined the NCHS initiative. The principal took the lead in engaging the Bronx Museum of Art as the organizational partner; the school plan envisioned a strong art component in teaching and learning processes as one way of engaging students in academic work and providing an arena for joint effort among students from a wide range of cultural, national, and linguistic backgrounds. South Brooklyn Community High School grew out of a 20-year old undertaking in which Good Shepherd Services developed and managed a school program in collaboration with John Jay High School. The school, as did the preceding program, only accepts and provides services for students with proven records of excessive high school truancy. The Gateway Institute has a developed model for creating new, small high schools that it has already put into practice. The Institute brings this model to its work within the NCHS initiative in its partnership at The Gateway Academy for Science, Mathematics and Research and The Gateway School of Environmental Research and Technology, both programs that opened in 2003 in the Bronx.

Multiple Arenas of Partnership Work

Partnerships across the schools engage in common arenas of work that are multiple, layered, and intersecting. Although these arenas often present simultaneous demands, it is useful to delineate them analytically. The arenas of work help make evident possible points of collaborative effort as well as various challenges of new school creation. The arenas include:

Creating *New* Schools

Work here might include, but is not limited to, participation in such tasks as identifying staff, enrolling students, dealing with facilities issues, securing equipment, and understanding and meeting DoE requirements.

Creating New Schools that are *Good, Effective* Schools

This requires a grasp of the principles of youth development that underpin the NCHS theory of change and an ability to translate those principles into practice. This might mean, for example, structuring a learning culture at the school by infusing youth development principles into roles, relationships, high expectations, scheduling, course format and parameters, and curricula, as well as providing appropriate professional development and support. Another aspect of the NCHS theory of change envisions situating schools within strong social networks that include engaged parents and strong community-school links.

Creating New Effective Schools that Meet the Challenges of *Small* Schools

Small size is a component of good, effective schools, but also carries particular challenges. Given the small number of staff, for example, schools must develop strategies to meet numerous demands on time and skills, such as attending meetings or fulfilling DoE and NCHS requirements, creating schedules that allow for common planning time and all-staff meetings while satisfying class requirements, and building staff capacity to wear multiple hats in the school without burning people out.

Creating the Means for *Collaborative* Work

This is the effort that is intrinsic to turning two partners into an effective partnership and includes, for example, defining and instilling partnership expectations in DoE and organizational staff members; building and supporting mechanisms that foster collaboration, such as effective means of sharing information, keeping abreast of each other's work, and making decisions; defining arenas of joint action; and developing agreed-upon roles and common expectations among involved staff of all partners.

Weight of the School in Partnership Work

Although the term "partnership" implies a relationship of equals, in fact, the school partner often enters a NCHS partnership as the "weighted partner," carrying significant authority comprised of legitimacy, knowledge, convention, responsibility, and institutionalized support. Such weight poses challenges when organizational and school partners try to rethink and reframe the components, structures, roles, and processes of effective, small high schools. In addition, the weight of school partners often presents hurdles in developing working partnerships in, for example, identifying arenas for joint work, especially in the classroom, or in positing credence in joint decision-making. As is often the case in any kind of weighted partnerships, it is commonly left to one partner (in this instance, the organizational partner) to figure out such hurdles or, at the least, press the issue with the weighted partner.

For partnerships aiming to build schools, the inherent authority of the school partner arises from several factors, including the following.

"Institutional Character of the School"

According to David Tyack and Larry Cuban, the weight of schools arises from two mutually reinforcing aspects of schools' "institutional character". The authors cogently sum these up in their book *Tinkering toward Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform:*

> During the last century, there has been much continuity in the structures, rules, and practices that organize the work of instruction. These organizational regularities, the grammar of schooling, include such familiar practices as the age-grading of students, the division of knowledge into separate subjects, and the self-contained classroom with one teacher. At the core of the school—in classroom instruction—change was slow. Reforms took place, but they were largely accretions around that core.... Most Americans have been to school and know what a 'real school' is like. Congruence with that cultural template has helped maintain the legitimacy of the institution in the minds of the public.... Both general beliefs in the broader culture about what a 'real school' was and the hold of standard operating procedures on staff and students put a brake on innovators who sought basic changes in classroom instruction.[18]

At times, the work of school staff and sometimes both partners together reflect the effort demanded to rethink the often unspoken assumptions and expectations inherent in schools' institutional character. Such conversations often center on mundane, concrete aspects of a school day because it is precisely those aspects that demand consideration and require action. For example, a partnership team—including the principal and director who share leadership in the school, the teachers, and the advocate counselors—work together to develop a school-wide, cross-partner approach to preparing for the Regents examinations. Another team, in a discussion framed by the principal but including the organizational partner, considers how to define, within city and state regulations, "what's worth a credit" in the school, taking into account the workplace internships and expeditions that form a part of the curriculum as well as classroom work. In still another discussion, mainly school staff members struggle to create an effective schedule that will incorporate both mandated classes and classes with the organizational partner that carry out the school's theme.

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[18] David Tyack and Larry Cuban, *Tinkering toward Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform,* Cambridge, Massachusetts (Harvard University Press) 1995, pp. 8-10.

School as the Locus of Action

Schools carry weight as the centers of action, the heart of the enterprise. School district educators traditionally are fundamental to this enterprise. Organizational partners must establish the legitimacy of their presence and create their school roles within the joint vision of the new school. One way of accomplishing this is for organizational staff to be part of daily school life. In some instances, these staff members are in the schools on a full-time basis; in other schools, staff members are present on a regular but part-time basis.

Institutionalized Support for School Partners

There is an inequality of resources that support the work of each partner, both in terms of the amount of available funding and the guarantee of future funding. In each school, the school partner has guaranteed, and in fact mandated, support for many staff members, including administrators, teachers, a school counselor, and others. The organizational partner can draw on fewer resources and often must take the initiative and responsibility to raise additional monies in order to participate as envisioned. In addition, the lack of guaranteed continued support for the organizational partner creates a sense of uncertainty regarding the future of the budding partnership. Organizational partners feel such uncertainty most sharply, but it can also affect the commitment of school partners to the difficult work of collaborating and rethinking high school education.

New Visions recognizes the pressure of resource questions on efforts to institutionalize partnership work and sustain it over time. Part of its role is to identify and help develop strategies for addressing the financial sustainability of the partnership model. This has happened, for example, in the successful application for a $5 million 21st Century grant for after-school enrichment programs.

Collaboration and the Diversity of Partnership Practices

Efforts to collaborate can be difficult and demanding. The collaborative process requires partners to define new roles for themselves and create relationships with their partners, including the means to communicate, interact, and make joint decisions. Such work requires a perception that collaborating is worthwhile because it will repay the effort demanded. Within the NCHS context, such repayment focuses on improved student outcomes, but may also include development of organizations in new directions, greater satisfaction among teachers, and stronger school-community links. Effective integrated partnership also requires the intentional nurturing of a collaborative habit of mind—that is, the ability and willingness to think reflexively in collaborative terms—and the systematic development of mechanisms and routines that structure, facilitate, and promote collaboration.

Collaboration is often spoken of as a strategy to reduce program redundancies or to create efficiencies of scale, or to stretch resources by drawing on multiple organizations. In the NCHS initiative, partners are being asked to achieve perhaps the most exciting and challenging form of collaborative effort: incorporating the work and capacities of two different groups of actors and their very different institutional homes and achieving new, integrated—not add-on—program components and practices within the new schools in their efforts to co-create more engaging and effective learning environments. For the New Century partners, this has meant finding ways to collaborate in the midst of starting and running their schools.

There is great diversity in the organizational arrangements that partners put into place in their schools. The term "organizational arrangements" refers to the instituted social relationships and practices through which organizations conduct their work. Pivotal arrangements for any organization include internal communications and information sharing, authority and reporting relationships, and decision-making processes and leverage. The development of organizational arrangements in the new schools often entails ongoing negotiating between partners and reflects the variety of interests and aims among partnerships. Broad arrangements reflect conceptions of partnership and help set the parameters within which specific practices play out. Examples of such arrangements include the institutionalization of leadership roles, in-school presence of organizational staff, school use of organizational sites, and the range of arenas through which organizational partners enter into the daily life of schools.

Shared Leadership of Schools

A few partnerships explicitly practice a shared-leadership model in their schools. For example, South Brooklyn Community High School has a DoE principal and a Good Shepherd Services director. The two leaders have regular daily meetings as well as more spontaneous huddles when specific issues or tasks demand. The two staffs—teachers and advocate counselors—carry complementary responsibilities for students' progress in terms of academics, social supports, and personal growth. Other New Century partnerships have a variety of processes that support shared leadership and decision-making, although the structures may not be as intentional as they are at South Brooklyn.

In-School Presence of Organizational Staff

Some schools have full-time organizational staff teams on site, such as the Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services team at Community Prep High School and East Side House Settlement staff members at Mott Haven Village Preparatory High School. Other schools have an organizational staff member on-site for two or more days a week, as in the classroom work and planning with teachers of the Bronx Museum of Art studio artist at Bronx International High School, or in the Expeditionary Learning and curricular work of the Outward Bound staff person

at The Bronx Guild. At times, schools start without an on-site organizational staff member, but over time the organizational partner recognizes a value in having such a presence. For example, Mosholu Montefiore Community Center, the organizational partner at Bronx Aerospace Academy, raised funds to support an in-school staff person during the second year of the school's existence. In another instance, ASPIRA of New York, Inc., utilized a match of state and federal monies to create a team of youth workers, comprised of a coordinator and three youth workers, to be on-site at Marble Hill School for International Studies.

School Use of Organizational Sites

In many instances, the utilization of an organizational partner's staff experts and facilities is an integral part of schools' academic and social support program. Strong examples of such use are the South Brooklyn Community High School, which is housed in Good Shepherd Services' new school building, and the New York Harbor School's daily use of a classroom at the South Street Seaport Museum. In other examples, the Brooklyn Academy of Science and the Environment's science classes take place at Brooklyn Botanic Garden and Prospect Park and involve organizational experts in the curriculum. In a similar fashion, several schools with art organization partners regularly use partners' facilities and staff experts for classes. Examples here include Discovery High School and Manhattan Class Company Theater, Bronx Theatre High School and Roundabout Theatre Company, Bronx High School for the Visual Arts and Lehman College Art Gallery, and Celia Cruz Bronx High School of Music and Lehman College. In other instances, students make site visits to the organizational partner in order to benefit from special facilities and expertise, such as Pelham Preparatory Academy's trips to the University of Vermont or Bronx Guild's use of the climbing wall at NYC Outward Bound. Another use of organizational sites is to mark special events; for example, the annual school-community festival of Bronx International High School takes place at the Bronx Museum of Art.

Organizational Partners' Entry Points and Arenas of Activity in the Daily Life of Schools

Entry points and arenas of activity—as other aspects of the NCHS initiative—are in the process of discovery and growth, and organizational partners are frequently engaged in a mix of activities. Arenas range across the entire spectrum of school facets, from support for the school as an organization and for the principal as the school leader, to engagement in the school's curriculum and in the teaching and learning of students and faculty, to promotion of positive school culture, to providing social supports to students and teachers, to opening up access to a great variety of additional resources. Moreover, the roles of school and organizational partners change and shift as they respond to students' interests and needs, develop their partnerships, and refine their notions of schools and education.

Brief Illustrative Example

The mixture of partner characteristics and partnership practices vary from school to school. The Bronx Guild and Mott Haven Village Preparatory High School, two New Century high schools in the Bronx that opened in fall 2002, help illustrate the range of NCHS partners and partnerships. The two partnerships share both significant similarities and differences, and in many ways can serve as bookends of the partnership strategy in practice. The two organizational partners—NYC Outward Bound Center (Outward Bound) at Bronx Guild and East Side House Settlement (East Side House) at Mott Haven Village Preparatory High School—are similar in the following ways:

- Each is a well-established, successful organization with a strong sense of mission.
- Each has had previous connections with schools. Outward Bound provided its Expeditionary Learning curriculum and resources in schools during the regular school day. East Side House ran an after-school program in a middle school and also provided its Youth Leadership Program to high school students from a variety of schools.
- Each sees engagement in the NCHS initiative as a way to have positive impact on youth and to improve students' academic, civic, social, and personal learning and growth.
- Each has a clear and articulated sense of self-interest in becoming a partner for a New Century high school. Outward Bound wants to integrate its curriculum and perspectives on teaching and learning within the school and move toward developing Outward Bound high schools. East Side House sees the relationship with schools as an extension of its community mission—a way of being in and of the community that simultaneously is future oriented (working with youth), fosters and supports community-building efforts, and establishes deep ties with a critical institutional arena in the community.
- For both partners, the partnership work opens the possibility of establishing an institutional sphere within which to operate and exercise influence.

At the same time, within its partnership and school, Outward Bound and East Side House began at different starting points and have been enacting different, albeit constantly evolving, roles and practices, as described in *Table 1* below.

Table 1: Illustrative Example of Two Partnerships

Bronx Guild **DoE Educators and NYC Outward Bound Center**	**Mott Haven Village Preparatory High School** **DoE Educators and East Side House Settlement**
Principal and teachers created the NCHS proposal for Bronx Guild; initially, Outward Bound was not part of the planning team.	East Side House executive director drew together and was a major player on the planning team, which created the NCHS proposal.
Principal selected Outward Bound as the organizational partner.	East Side House executive director identified the NCHS principal, who was a planning team member.
Outward Bound is a citywide organization with the main office located in a different borough than the school.	East Side House is a community-based organization located nearby the school.
Principal knows Outward Bound, having previously taught in a school with an Outward Bound program.	Principal knows East Side House, having worked for the settlement in the past.
Outward Bound initially had little role in the school's organizational development, but this role has been evolving. Outward Bound now participates in teacher hiring, leadership meetings with the principal, and monthly council meetings with school and organizational staff.	East Side House began with and continues to exercise a strong role in the organizational development of the school and support of the principal as the school leader.
Outward Bound envisions strong involvement in teaching and learning through its Expeditionary Learning program. It participates on joint committees and in council meetings, addressing issues such as student assessment standards, curriculum, and school culture.	East Side House states that curricular/pedagogic issues are the purview of the principal and faculty. But it makes clear its expectation of students' high academic achievement within the overarching goal of students going on to college.
Outward Bound is involved in social support for students and development of student-faculty relationships through wilderness and other Expeditionary Learning experiences.	East Side House is involved in social support for students through on-site counseling, after-school discussion groups, coaching teachers on advisory groups.
Outward Bound staff is regularly on-site although not located at the school; there is no full-time Outward Bound staff.	East Side House Youth Leadership staff members are located at the school on a full-time basis.
Outward Bound provides a range of resources, including: a staff member who facilitates monthly council meetings of school and organizational staff; Expeditionary Learning staff expert; wilderness and other Expeditionary Learning experiences in curriculum; and slots at its summer Expeditionary Learning camp.	East Side House provides a range of resources, including: use of its facilities; extensive fund-raising for programs, staff development/teacher training, and technology support; staff to lead in-school classes re test prep and youth concerns; and work on a variety of administrative tasks, such as development of a school brochure.

V CONCLUSION

The overall feeling in the initiative has been—and continues to be—one of great hope tempered by the sense, as in any cutting-edge social experiment, of feeling one's way. In practice, all involved staffs are dealing with challenges, glitches, and unexpected consequences as they experience pressure to get things going. At least at the start, there have been few guidelines and no models. School and organizational partners, working to create the schools they envision, are refining educational foundations and structures in the midst of teaching students, forming school expectations and cultures, and dealing with limited resources and difficult, sometimes resistant, school bureaucracies. New Visions and YDI are working to support partnerships in their work, devising and refining the supports in the midst of implementation. Throughout the early fieldwork period, the atmosphere has been, for all involved groups, one of intense work, challenge, trial and success/error, efforts to maneuver strategically through bureaucratic and political mazes, innovative change, and, at times, confusion and frustration. For the documenter, it has been a time of immersion in shifting and evolving ideas, efforts to relate ideas to implementation details, and kaleidoscopic overlaps, as well as disconnects, in roles and goals of multiple partners at city, district (now region), school, and organizational levels.

As the discussion above demonstrates, the partnership concept has been changing since the start, as have efforts at supportive assistance. One aspect of the evolution here stands out: the learning of all involved about the potential of partnership. New Visions staff members have honed their ability to be flexible in their approach to partnership—to learn from practice and translate that learning into refining concept and support. At least some DoE regional staff members have gained a respect for the partnership strategy and its practice as well. One says:

> [T]he partnerships have come to be far more effective than we had ever imagined. They are, of course, very different in different schools, but, in general, the organizational partners have taken on substantial responsibilities with regard to their schools and, in some cases, really have become 'co-responsible.' They have, in fact, brought a valuable and different perspective to the work and often have forced the school-based leaders to be far more thoughtful than they would have been otherwise. There is often a tension in the relationships created, but most often it has been a constructive tension.

The NCHS work itself pushed the concept of partnership, allowing the support organizations and the partners themselves to begin learning what partnership could mean—for students, schools, and involved institutions. The concept evolved as the work proceeded. The refined concept set new expectations and provided examples so partners might glean possibilities through the work of their colleagues. Assistance and supports were reshaped to better meet the needs of an enhanced idea of partnership. This dialectical dynamic continues apace today between conception, practice, and support, between the theoretical shape of partnership and the many ways the strategy is being played out on the ground.

PRACTICING PARTNERSHIP

LEVER FOR REFORM IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

August 2005

PRACTICING PARTNERSHIP
LEVER FOR REFORM IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

New Visions for Public Schools' New Century High Schools Initiative has grown enormously since its conception in 2001. By fall 2004, the initiative boasted 75 new small schools, serving nearly 12,750 students.[1] Most of these schools are located in the same buildings as large high schools that have been identified by the New York City Department of Education as chronically low-performing and designated for phasing out.[2] The New Visions approach aims to transform these large schools into campuses of autonomous small schools that unite rigorous academics and personalized supports as critical features of effective education—especially for students who are often disengaged from and unprepared for high school-level work.[3]

But, the initiative asserts, schools alone cannot be responsible for fulfilling this challenging task. Instead, communities must be able to call on multiple stakeholders—schools, but others as well—to make quality education available for and accessible to all of the city's youth. Toward this end, the New Century High Schools (NCHS) initiative brings to bear its hallmark strategy of school-level partnerships.[4] *Each New Century high school is expected to reflect—both in its conception and its practices—a working partnership that engages and integrates efforts of Department of Education educators (the school or DoE partner) and staff from a non-profit organization (the organizational partner).* The strategy looks to the rich and varied resources of knowledge, experience, opportunities, and skills that such partnerships can bring to a school and its students, helping to ensure implementation of the initiative's ten guiding principles and thus achievement of strong academic and personal student growth.[5]

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[1] In March 2001, New Visions issued the first request for planning grant proposals for New Century High Schools. To date, the number of new schools and programs has increased each year: in 2002, 17 opened; in 2003, 24; and in 2004, 36.

[2] See Appendix A for a chart illustrating the siting of the current New Century high schools.

[3] For examples of supportive research, see Linda Darling-Hammond, J. Ancess, and S.W. Ort, "Reinventing High School: Outcomes of the Coalition Campus Schools Project," *American Educational Research Journal,* vol. 39, no. 3, Fall 2002, pp. 639-673; Institute for Education and Social Policy (IESP), Steinhardt School of Education, New York University, *Final Report of the Evaluation of New York Networks for School Renewal*, New York: IESP, December 2001; and V.E. Lee and D.T. Burkam, "Dropping Out of High School: The Role of School Organization and Structure," *American Educational Research Journal,* vol. 40, no. 3, Summer 2003, pp. 353-393.

[4] The term "strategy" is intentional. The initiative aims for integrated working partnerships in order to enrich and strengthen educational offerings, thereby achieving high levels of academic, social, and personal growth and post-graduation achievement among students.

[5] See Appendix B for the initiative's guiding principles, created by New Visions for Public Schools, with assistance from the Youth Development Institute and consultant Jean Thomases. See Appendix C for criteria for lead partner organizations. The term "lead partner" refers to the organization at each New Century school that takes on major responsibilities as fiscal manager for the grant funds and as collaborator in the implementation and development of the school. In addition to lead partners, the number of "collaborating partners" has grown over the years, a role that can be negotiated by principals and/or lead partners on a school-by-school basis in order to bring additional skills and resources to the school. At times, a collaborating partner plays a major role in a school, such as the South Street Seaport Museum with the New York Harbor School. At other times, collaborating partners play more limited and specific roles. Each New Century school must have a lead partner but may have no or multiple collaborating partners.

Partnerships currently range across a broad continuum, yet the innovative and radical strategy of integrated partnership is hardly at the point of maturity. At the start of 2005, the oldest New Century partnerships are just in their third year of school implementation, the youngest in their fifth month. Still, across many schools, the collaboration of partners working together—that is, *practicing partnership*—has led, even at this early stage of the initiative, to a variety of new curricular approaches, personalization strategies, out-of-school activities, thematic frameworks, pedagogic practices, and organizational development and management practices. Partnership efforts have also begun making inroads toward systemic change. There have been, for example, an increasing number of regional superintendents' events specifically to recognize and support organizational partners' contributions in the work of their schools.

It has become clear over time that the partnership strategy acts as a lever for reform in another, less anticipated way as well. Enacting school-level partnerships requires a *reframing of the methods and content—that is, the means and meaning—of high school education.* DoE and organizational partners, along with other key initiative participants, face the challenges and potentials of defining, negotiating, and aligning their roles, relationships, and responsibilities as they seek to create—through their everyday aims and tasks—the structures, processes, and shared perspectives that underpin their joint work and their schools. This reframing, an essential aspect of thoroughgoing reform, sheds light on the scope and sustainability of NCHS reforms and the reach of those reforms to effect change in multiple arenas.

DOCUMENTING PARTNERSHIP

Carnegie Corporation of New York is providing support for a three-year documentation study of the implementation and practice of the partnership strategy of the New Century High Schools Initiative. The Youth Development Institute (YDI) of the Fund for the City of New York, with assistance from New Visions for Public Schools (New Visions), is overseeing the study. The study, conducted by Dr. Janice M. Hirota, an urban anthropologist, explores the questions:

- What does the partnership strategy look like in practice?
- How are school and organizational partners conceptualizing, implementing, and supporting their partnerships?
- How are these practices affecting daily life in schools? What are the achievements and challenges?

The study relies primarily on fieldwork methodology in collecting and analyzing data. The analytic themes developed in study papers are based on interviews, visits to schools and organizations, and participant-observation of meetings, focus groups, professional development sessions, and other events. The ongoing fieldwork has involved a wide variety of key participants, including staff from New Visions, YDI, and regional and central DoE offices, as well as school-level DoE and organizational partners. The study also draws on initiative, school, regional, and central DoE materials.

Partnership Papers

The initial year of the study culminated in a paper entitled *Partnership & Innovation: New Century High Schools in New York* (in this volume). The paper looks at the creation of the first cohort of New Century high schools, focusing on the following themes:

- The evolving meaning of the partnership concept at New Visions, including a growing focus on the potential of the partnership as different from and greater than the work of schools and of organizations acting individually
- New Visions' supports for school and organizational partners and how these convey expectations of the practice of partnership
- The multiple, often unanticipated tasks and pressures that school and organizational partners encounter in opening their schools, at times hindering the ability to develop agreements, processes, and structures to facilitate collaborative work
- Various ways that partnership became evident in New Century high schools over the school year.

This second paper follows the developmental trajectory of New Century high schools, identifying and exploring major themes of partnership in a range of young and more mature schools. The paper begins by looking at two dynamics that form critical aspects of the context within which partners—both Department of Education and organizational—implement the partnership strategy. These dynamics are: the influence of traditional perspectives on the content, processes, and meanings of public school education; and the development over time of the new schools and partnerships—and indeed of the initiative itself.

The paper goes on to consider some of the many ways that New Century high schools and partnerships vary even as they share a common initiative mission and "critical elements" including small size, guidance by the initiative's ten principles, and the partnership at the core. The schools also share a framework for planned growth, co-location, for most, on a multi-school campus, and an initial planning and

vetting process. But through that process and into implementation, the initiative has aimed to foster innovative thinking about teaching and learning. Each school is supported to develop—within DoE parameters and the effective school standards of the initiative—*its own* curricular framework, pedagogy, guidelines, and interests. This is part of the initiative's effort to meet and build on the various strengths, interests, and needs of the city's youth.

Against this background of commonality, variation, and innovation, the paper explores ways that DoE and organizational partners implement their partnerships—their roles, practices, quandaries, and challenges. The paper concludes with a look at the New Century partnership strategy in terms of the potential sustainability and breadth of the initiative and its reforms. Here, the paper considers some more general critiques of education reform efforts and, within this broader context, argues that the partnership strategy itself acts as a lever for reform in unanticipated ways.

The study draws on a broad range of field sources. In addition to those cited above, these include for this paper focused exploration of six particular partnerships. These schools and organizational partners are:

- Bronx Guild: A New York City Outward Bound School and New York City Outward Bound
- Bronx International High School and the Bronx Museum of Art
- Brooklyn Academy of Science and the Environment and the Brooklyn Botanic Garden and Prospect Park Alliance
- Community Prep High School and Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services
- Mott Haven Village Preparatory High School and East Side House Settlement
- South Brooklyn Community High School and Good Shepherd Services.[6]

Over time, the broad and closer looks proved to be complementary means of identifying and testing dynamics and themes that are part of the partnership process and structure. The opportunity to learn simultaneously from a range of perspectives and venues across the initiative and from a handful of particular schools provided: a context within which to understand particular strategies and situations; a way to explore variations and commonalities among partnerships

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[6] These schools prompted closer looks for a variety of reasons. In some instances, staff at New Visions or YDI pointed out a school because of the perceived strength of the partnering organization or an innovative approach to partnership work or the high level of integration between DoE and organizational partners. In other instances, a school's participation in an initiative event inspired a follow-up visit. In still other instances, the school's work with particular student populations was an important draw. These schools were not selected as a group or chosen according to any criteria other than their ability—among many other schools—to provoke positive interest.

and partners; and venues for testing the prevalence or idiosyncrasy of an experience, challenge, or approach.

CONTEXT of NEW CENTURY HIGH SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

A partnership strategy that envisions the joint work and accountability of two different entities requires change on both sides as actors together reframe, negotiate, and create the means—the strategies, structures, procedures, roles, and tasks—for their collaborative effort. The context of this potentially fundamental transformation can be an important element that fosters or hinders such change. Two broad contextual dynamics are important in understanding how the New Century partnership strategy has been put into practice: (1) the significant influence of traditional perspectives and (2) the ongoing evolution of change.

Traditional Perspectives as Context

Traditional perspectives have significant influence on the roles and authority of principals and teachers and on the educational and management practices within schools. The give-and-take and evolving practice of New Century partnerships takes place between DoE educators and organizational staffs in the process of creating and developing new small schools. Yet, the school is an established institution that "[o]ver long periods of time.... ha[s] remained basically similar in [its] core operation, so much so that these regularities have imprinted themselves on students, educators, and the public as the essential features of a 'real school.'"[7] A strategy that defines a non-profit organization as an equal partner in creating and sustaining a school must prove itself against conventional expectations. In their New Century schools, DoE and organizational staffs find that partnership requires redefining the relationship between organizations and schools. This often means a struggle against tradition in two broad areas: these might be called the weight of the school and the weight of conventional practice.

Weight of the School. DoE staff members move with authority vis-à-vis the new small schools, with a legitimacy and knowledge born of professional training and experience, assigned responsibility, convention, and institutional expectations and support. Within traditional and commonsense perspectives, DoE staff members

[7] David Tyack and Larry Cuban, *Tinkering toward Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform,* Harvard University Press, 1995, p.7.

belong in schools; they are, in fact, often seen as the schools. Outside organizations, on the other hand, conventionally hold *peripheral relationships* to schools—as programs in after-school or other out-of-school times, sites for school trips, consultants for clearly delineated in-school projects or special curricula, providers of specialized services such as health clinics, and founts of other resources. In the past, the involvement of outside organizations has been at the discretion of school personnel. Thus, partnering organizations come to the NCHS initiative without ongoing customary roles, legitimacy, authority, or responsibilities in the teaching and learning that make up the daily life of schools.

If one thinks of partnership as a see-saw, the weight of the school initially puts the DoE end on the ground and in control, with the organizational end up in the air. A critical aspect of practicing wide-reaching and integrated partnership is working to identify the point of balance, a point that can shift and change as schools, partnerships, and the initiative evolve.

Weight of Conventional Practice. DoE and organizational staff members who hope to change pedagogy, develop interdisciplinary approaches to content areas, use student work to assess classroom practice, and so forth, can find the draw of conventional pedagogy and curricula difficult to counteract. For example, the move to standards-based education and the concomitant pressure on schools for high test-passage rates, which in New York state focuses on the Regents examinations, can mean a hesitancy to utilize less conventional teaching methods, such as project-based learning, field studies, theme-oriented curricula, and the use of internships, community action projects, and mentorships.

The logistics of a school's existence may also hinder the efforts of partnering DoE and organizational staffs to change teaching and learning. For example, the conventional class period lasts 45 minutes but a school may decide that 60- or 75-minute periods are more conducive to its teaching practices. But, because most New Century schools are co-located with other high schools, the ability of each school to determine the length of its own class periods is complicated by the necessity of sharing common spaces such as the cafeteria, gymnasium, and library, and also at times science labs and other classrooms. Scheduling becomes more complicated when even one school starts and ends its periods at times that differ from the other schools. The difficulty is exacerbated, of course, if a second and third school want different schedules. In order to cope, schools need to know scheduling strategies, and even then some principals argue that co-location means that schools must be on the same schedule because of the shared space issue. Within this perspective, if 45-minute classes are the norm, the only options are 45- or 90-minute classes, options that, in the views of some, are either too short or too long for the teaching and learning they want in their schools.

The weight of conventional practice—whether because of the attraction of the known, lack of training and experience, logistical issues, skepticism of new practices, or simply the hectic pace and demands in starting a new school—can, and often does, pull small schools toward big school practices.

Evolutionary Frameworks as Context

As with any far-reaching systemic reform, the evolution of the initiative and its implementation forms a critical aspect of the context within which New Century partnerships operate. This dynamic of ongoing development touches the work of all key groups of New Century actors—school-based educators and organizational staffs, New Visions staff, YDI and other collaborating consultants, and regional and central DoE staffs—and includes a number of developmental structures and trends at play across the initiative. One of these is the growth of each school with the addition of a new grade during each of its initial four years. Another involves the evolution of practices and understandings within partnerships and schools, and also within New Visions and the Department of Education. Implementation of New Century reforms has entailed an iterative process of practice–reflection–articulation of lessons–refinement of practice.

Structure of New Century High Schools. New Century high schools begin with a developmental plan that is prescribed by the initiative and embedded in each school's structure. In the first year, each school generally admits only ninth grade students and develops a new grade in each of its three successive years when, for example, the first class of ninth grade students moves into the tenth grade. It takes, therefore, four years for a New Century school to become a full high school, with ninth through twelfth grades.

This structural design has a striking effect on the school during this initial period. For example, moving from its first to second years, the school doubles in size, both in its student body and its teaching staff. Although the growth is not as dramatic in each subsequent year, it is significant as a new crop of ninth graders is admitted and current students move up a grade. Beyond population size, the developmental curve means that a New Century high school—and in some sites, this means DoE and organizational staffs together—must develop and implement new curricula in each of its first four years, create ways to welcome new ninth graders while transitioning current students into the role of sharing their school with growing numbers of students, establish and reestablish governance policies and structures, maintain and extend the fledgling school culture, fashion ways to capture and transmit the school's institutional history, and socialize and incorporate new staff into the mission, goals, and practices of the school, including the partnership strategy. The expansion raises multiple questions as well, such as whether first year staff, now experienced with the school's ninth grade curriculum,

should become teachers for the new ninth graders or move to the tenth grade and continue working with the students they know.[8] At the same time, the intentional growth of New Century schools contributes to the sense of changing arenas of reform and, in various partnerships, evolving and deepening practice. Within this stepped expansion, some organizational partners, such as East Side House Settlement and Brooklyn Botanic Garden and Prospect Park Alliance, are also responsible for developing additional curricular components for second and third year students, such as internships and research projects.

Evolution of Reform. All initiatives expect program development and refinement through practice and reflection, especially in the early years. But the rapid growth of the New Century initiative also has allowed quick turnaround of lessons gleaned from experience to aid in program development as the initiative both matures and expands to include new schools and new partnerships. New Visions' growing surety about expectations and supports—a process that continues in explicit ways—is clearly expressed in the development of the partnership strategy. For example, the Internal Partnership Core Team at New Visions meets regularly to discuss partnership issues, and has developed, implemented, and supported strategies for promoting and researching partnerships. Team members, including consultants and staff from New Visions and the Youth Development Institute, consider such topics as patterns of organizational commitment, for instance, staff in one organization are involved from up, down, and across the organizational ladder; organizational participation in the development of personalization strategies; and ways strong partnerships can be mirrored in and fostered by organizations' many and varied contributions to their schools.

Over the three cohorts of New Century schools, New Visions' growing experience helped better prepare planning teams for school conceptualization and implementation, including greater clarity in expectations for partnerships.[9] Participants received support for incorporating the concept of partnership into the school-creation process, developing a school concept paper, and, for those whose papers passed the first review stage, intensive coaching during preparation of school proposals. After the second stage of review, those teams with funded

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[8] The fall 2004 cohort of New Century schools included seven that will eventually be sixth to twelfth grade or seventh to twelfth grade schools. These schools have begun with two grades, a sixth or seventh grade and a ninth grade, and will be developing two curricula each year until they reach full size.

[9] For a diagram of the overlapping nature of the planning and creation cycles, see Appendix D. In some regions, weekly 2-hour development sessions followed a comprehensive, detailed curriculum that, over time, included learning from previous cohorts. Depending on the year, a mix of staff and consultants from school districts or regions, Regional Offices of Small Schools (ROSS), and New Visions led the sessions and coaching. In preparation for the 2002 and 2003 school openings, district staff members, particularly in the office of the then Bronx High Schools Superintendency, were deeply involved in the training and coaching of school-creation teams. Beginning with the 2003 cohort of new small schools in Brooklyn and continuing with the 2004 cohort, ROSS, regional, and New Visions staff members, at times working as training teams, variously carried out the school-creation training and coaching. The move from districts to regions accorded with the DoE's total restructuring of the New York City public school system during the summer of 2003, when all 32 school districts were transformed into 10 regions, under the management of regional superintendents. In the process, borough offices of high schools were eliminated. The system restructuring was implemented on July 1, 2003, shifting geographic divisions, offices, personnel, authority relationships, and so forth.

proposals received preparation on both academic and operational fronts. Thus, in preparation for fall 2004, New Visions and the Regional Office of Small Schools (ROSS) staff members in Region 6 in Brooklyn, for example, conducted bi-weekly workshops throughout March - May for principal designees and representatives from the partnering organizations on such topics as curriculum development, summer sessions around teacher planning and professional development, and summer bridge programs to introduce students to their new schools.

Lessons and insights from the cycles of school creation, implementation, and operation continue to push the initiative. New Visions is deep in planning for New Century schools that will open in 2005 and 2006, exercising greater involvement and deliberation about the shape of these schools and partnerships. Instead of the "open call" for potential DoE and organizational participants that New Visions utilized during the first three planning periods, staff members are examining the "portfolio" of current New Century schools with the aim of identifying "gaps" that new schools might fill. By extension, staff are also identifying organizations that can bring the kinds of experience and expertise such schools will need and engaging them in conceptualizing new schools. Intentional work with target organizations, then, precedes development of the planning team. At the moment, New Visions is working directly with two organizations—Facing History and Ourselves and Lincoln Center Institute—to support the conceptualization and planning of two of the three schools to open in September 2005. New Visions also has provided support to Sistas and Brothas United of the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition, the organizational partner of the third school to open in fall 2005. Sistas and Brothas worked with Fordham University and Bank Street College of Education in developing the concept of their school. By opening day, planning for at least one school will have lasted more than two years. Looking beyond to 2006, New Visions is exploring gaps that 12 more new schools might help fill. Thus, for example, a few current New Century schools serve particular student populations with special needs, such as court-involved youth, students who have dropped out of school, under-credited, over-aged students, and English language learners. New Visions administrators are asking whether other populations might benefit from attending specially designed New Century schools, and how lessons from existing New Century schools and partnerships can assist in developing new schools that meet proven needs.

New Visions is also moving to disseminate in more systematic ways its growing knowledge about school creation and implementation. Currently under preparation is the organization's School Sustainability Toolkit. The working draft includes sections on school creation, implementation, and partnerships. In addition, New Visions has identified a broad need for professional development regarding new school creation and implementation. Based on the organization's work in developing, coaching, supporting, and extending the thinking of teams interested in starting a new school, staff members are refining a planning curriculum and aim to

transform it into a course, with college credit, on starting new small schools. New Visions will provide interested teams—DoE educators, organizational staff members, and others—with a 9- or 10-month course that addresses issues of design, organizational development, implementation, and realization of school plans. The inclusive approach toward potential class participants highlights the initiative's investment in the partnership strategy and emphasizes the dynamic interaction between partnership development and school development.

THE SHAPE OF NEW CENTURY HIGH SCHOOLS

From the start, the New Century High Schools Initiative aimed for schools that would educate the city's youth to high standards. The initial "Invitation to Submit Implementation Grant Proposal" charges "New York City urban school districts and their community partners to fundamentally rethink their capacity to create, reform and support secondary schools that are effective for all students."[10] The initiative calls for schools "characterized by rich and rigorous curricula, personalization, effective teaching and learning, and clear pathways to post-secondary education, careers and community participation."[11] According to the initiative, such schools must incorporate "a common set of critical elements," which at the start included nine principles: rigorous instructional program; personalized relationships; clear focus and expectations; instructional leadership; school-based professional development and collaboration; meaningful continuous assessment of student learning; supportive community and parent/caregiver engagement; student engagement and youth development; and effective uses of technology.[12] At the same time, the New Century initiative does not prescribe the structure and design of the new small schools. Instead, the initiative expects schools to vary in how the critical elements are put into practice, stating that "effective schools may have diverse designs" and further that "[t]he New Century High School Consortium is committed to a vision of urban school districts where there are a variety of effective small schools so that all students have opportunities to thrive."[13]

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[10] New Visions for Public Schools, "An Initiative for New School Creation and School Transformation in New York City Public High Schools: Invitation to Submit Implementation Grant Proposal" for schools to open in September 2002, p. 4.

[11] New Visions for Public Schools, "New Century High Schools for New York City Initiative: Request for Proposals" for planning grant applications due June 01, 2002, for schools to open in September 2002, p. 1.

[12] New Visions, "An Initiative for New School Creation and School Transformation in New York City Public High Schools," pp. 5-6. As with all parts of the initiative, the principles have been refined, although they remain essentially the same. In addition, a tenth principle—partnerships with community organizations—has been added, affording recognition of the critical role of organizational partners.

[13] New Visions, "An Initiative for New School Creation and School Transformation in New York City Public High Schools," p. 5. This may be seen as an early forecast of the evolution to the portfolio approach to school creation, discussed above.

One must understand the varied reflections of the shared principles and goal in order to grasp the texture of the New Century implementation. Some points of variation arise because of structural or operational features of the school system itself or because of the origin of the school conception. Other points of variation, such as partnerships, have been intentionally invited by the initiative as innovative efforts to create effective schools. There is no single model for effective schools. It is, in fact, through a multiplicity of educational visions, frameworks, and practices, grounded in the New Century principles, that schools can meet the diverse strengths, needs, and interests of the city's adolescents and their families and communities.

Organizational Partners

Partnership is a primary means of introducing innovative variation into schools. From the start, initiative planners envisioned a wide range of possible organizational partners, and at the start of each of the three major school creation cycles to date, the initiative issued an open call for educators and non-profit organizations to join in the school creation effort.[14] The initiative's relatively broad, although demanding, criteria for organizational partners opened a door into the daily life of public schools for non-profit organizations. The strategy drew a mix of organizations, most with experience with the public school system and with youth, often through special or out-of-school programs. Responsive groups included: community-based organizations that provide direct services through a community-building perspective; arts organizations, such as museums, theatre groups, art galleries, and college music departments; social/cultural groups such as botanical gardens, public parks, and historical societies; institutions of higher education; youth development organizations; service institutions, such as hospitals and the fire department; and others. *Table 2* below draws on the six in-depth schools for illustrative examples of the kinds of differences that occur across partnering groups and the ways these differences intersect.

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[14] See, for example, New Visions for Public Schools, "New Century High Schools for New York City Initiative: Request for Proposals," p. 6, and "An Initiative for New School Creation and School Transformation in New York City Public High Schools," p. 8.

Table 2: Variation in Organizational Partners

Organizational Partner	High School	Organization's Primary Scope	Organization's Major Focus
New York City Outward Bound	Bronx Guild	Citywide, with affiliation to the national Outward Bound	Educational Services to Students and Professional Development for Teachers
Bronx Museum of Art	Bronx International High School	Borough-wide	Arts
Brooklyn Botanic Garden + Prospect Park Alliance	Brooklyn Academy of Science and the Environment	Citywide	Social/Cultural
Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services	Community Prep High School	Citywide	Services for Court-Involved Youth
East Side House Settlement	Mott Haven Village Preparatory High School	Community-based, with affiliation to the citywide United Neighborhood Houses	Direct Services/Community Building
Good Shepherd Services	South Brooklyn Community High School	Community-based	Direct Services/Community Building

Point of Origin of School Concept

As discussed above, the school-creation process for New Century schools opening in 2002 through 2004 offered—to all interested DoE staff and organizational representatives—professional development sessions on school basics and the NCHS vision. In addition, there was individual coaching for school creation teams, first to develop concept papers and then, for those teams that gained planning support, to create full proposals for envisioned schools. Throughout, the process meant to support teams of educators, organizational representatives, and often others, including parents and students, in the development of *their own* school visions and proposals. In all three school-creation periods, some educators and organizations entered the process already planning to work together; others identified fellow collaborators during the process. At times, DoE or New Visions staff members helped link together participants with similar ideas and goals.

Based on the experiences of the three planning cycles, it is clear that school concepts, while generally refined and fleshed out by the planning teams, often are sparked by an originating idea from a specific source, as indicated below in *Table 3*. In addition, the principal or the organizational partner may not be involved in the planning from the start; instead, in at least some instances, there is a point at which one person or the full team identifies and engages the missing key player(s) according to the needs of the planned school. Although the research is not

complete, data based on surveys of principals and organizational partners over the three cohorts seem to reveal an emerging pattern: when an organization initiates the planning process with a strong idea of the future school, it plays a robust role in the partnership and the execution of the school plan. Not surprisingly, these are often schools where organizational strengths are central to the school concept. In such situations, the organizations can also be pivotal in identifying the principals for their schools, another seeming indicator of future partnership strength.[15]

Table 3: Variation in Point of Origin of School Concept

School	Organizational Partner	Origin of School Concept	Principal/Organizational Partner
Bronx Guild	New York City Outward Bound	Principal	Principal selected Organizational Partner
Bronx International High School	Bronx Museum of Art	Principal, as a replication of Queens International High School	Principal selected Organizational Partner
Brooklyn Academy of Science and the Environment	Brooklyn Botanic Garden + Prospect Park Alliance	Organizational Co-Partners with Planning Team, including the person who became principal	Organizational Partners identified Principal
Community Prep High School	Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services	Organizational Partner	Organizational Partner identified Principal
Mott Haven Village Preparatory High School	East Side House Settlement	Organizational Partner with Planning Team, including the person who became principal	Organizational Partner identified Principal
South Brooklyn Community High School	Good Shepherd Services	Organizational Partner based on its program in practice for 20+ years	Organizational Partner identified Principal

Foundational and Structural Attributes of Schools

There are what might be called *foundational attributes* of each New Century high school. These are attributes, such as the school model or target student body, that are basic to the concept of the school. Thus, New Century schools were conceptualized and refined largely during the planning process, but some schools were based on extant models or programs. Also, most schools aim to serve a student population similar to that attending the phasing-out large schools. Seven New Century schools,

[15] There is ongoing research at New Visions that explores, among other correlations, the possible link between participation in planning a school and the strength and viability of the partnership in the school. The surveys are based on findings of the first partnership documentation phase. Report by Brad Gunton on the partnership survey is forthcoming.

however, serve specific groups, including The Young Women's Leadership School and The Eagle Academy for Young Men.[16] In addition, as mentioned earlier, seven New Century schools started with a sixth or seventh grade and a ninth grade; eventually these schools will run from the sixth or seventh grade through the twelfth grade, instead of the more common ninth through twelfth grades.[17]

Structural attributes, such as the siting of a school, can also influence the operation of a school and, hence, the work of organizational partners. In some schools, for example, organizational partners have dedicated space to use as offices and home bases; in many other schools, they do not. This may occur for a variety of reasons, including a lack of available space, a disinclination of school leadership to allocate space to organizational staff, a lack of organizational capacity to outstation staff, and limited organizational participation and therefore little claim to dedicated space. In addition, the influence of a school's site can be especially evident when a school is co-located with other schools in the same building. Co-location on a "campus" can bear, for example, on a school's class schedule, length of class periods, use of the bell system, and access to common areas such as lab facilities, cafeteria, library, auditorium, and gym, factors that can affect the work of organizational partners in the school.[18]

Table 4 below charts a number of foundational and structural variables and ways these variables mix across even a few basic categories.

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[16] In addition, these schools currently include: Bushwick Community High School (students who are over-age and under-credited), Bronx International High School (recent immigrants), Community Prep High School (court-involved youth), South Brooklyn Community High School (students who have high truancy records or who have dropped out), and The Urban Academy for History & Citizenship for Young Men.

[17] At present, these schools include: Bronx Latin High School, East Bronx Academy for the Future, The School for Democracy and Leadership, The School for Human Rights, West Bronx Academy for the Future, and The Young Women's Leadership School, Bronx Campus. In addition, The Eagle Academy for Young Men currently has just a ninth grade but eventually plans to be a seventh through twelfth grade school.

[18] The issue of co-located schools is central to the development and sustainability of new small schools in New York City and in other urban centers where small schools increasingly are seen as critical reforms for chronically failing schools. To site the new schools, many cities, including New York, are turning to adaptive reuse of large school buildings as a response to cost constraints and challenging real estate markets. New Visions is currently conducting the "Campus Project," bringing together personnel from its Documentation, Secondary Education, and Policy and Research staffs. The project is exploring the meaning, challenges, and opportunities for schools in multi-school buildings and ways these schools are developing strategies for collaborative decision-making and sharing of resources, experiences, and expertise. Based largely on findings from the documentation field research, the project will produce a study report and a practitioners' manual of promising practices, lessons learned, and challenges.

Table 4: Variation in Structural + Foundational Attributes Across Schools

School + Organizational Partner	Year Opened	Target Student Population	Dedicated Space for Org. Partner	Borough	Site + Co-located Schools
Bronx Guild Outward Bound	2002	Same as large HS	No	Bronx	Stevenson HS: 5 NCHS + phasing out large HS
Bronx International School Bronx Museum	2001; Became NCHS in 2002	Recent immigrants	No	Bronx	Morris HS: 4 NCHS + 1 other small HS + phasing out large HS
Brooklyn Academy of Science and the Environment Brooklyn Botanic Garden + Prospect Park Alliance	2003	Same as large HS	No	Brooklyn	Prospect Heights HS: 3 NCHS + 1 other small HS + phasing out large HS
Community Prep High School Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services	2002	Court-involved youth	Yes	Manhattan	Free Standing
Mott Haven Village Preparatory High School East Side House Settlement	2002	Same as large HS	Yes	Bronx	South Bronx HS: 3 NCHS (large HS already phased out)
South Brooklyn Community High School Good Shepherd Services (GSS)	2002	Students with excessive HS truancy or who have dropped out	Yes	Brooklyn	Free Standing (GSS School Bldg.)

This discussion on basic variables across the initiative just begins to explore the range and mix of differences among New Century high schools and partnerships. In part, the variations reflect the initiative's desire to offer a range of options to students and their families. At the same time, against this backdrop of variation, shared partnership aims, challenges, demands, and promising practices are emerging, suggesting commonalities that are inherent in the process itself of creating and implementing joint work. A grasp of these commonalities is basic to extracting lessons learned and creating indicators of the developmental progress of particular partnerships, both critical steps in supporting partnership growth and in assessing the role of partnerships in the operation of effective small schools. The Internal Partnership Core Team at New Visions has begun analyzing, as an initial foray, the

intersection of partnership and academic rigor in efforts to delineate just such lessons and indicators.

IV PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIES

> How can the unstructured New Century High School Initiative mandate [for school-level partnerships], so open to interpretation, be translated into a system of structures, processes, and practices that reflect a school's values and goals? What are ways that school and organizational partners can develop clarity about their roles and how they relate to each other? How can they develop trusting work relationships?
>
> —from a group discussion of partner organizations[19]

As with many initiatives, program visions and policies lay out general guidelines, but the work of translating these guidelines into practice becomes the purview of on-the-ground staffs. The New Century initiative intentionally adopts this process to a great extent, aiming for the latitude that will foster innovation to meet the range of student strengths and needs. At the core of the process is the effort of actually creating and implementing, of negotiating and refining the new partnership roles and practices. Here, the efforts of principals and school-involved organizational leadership are pivotal, but many others are deeply involved as well, including DoE and organizational teachers in classrooms, organizational social workers and school guidance counselors, out-of-school organizational staff, and others. It is largely these groups of actors who must figure out how to take the initiative's aims and mandates and translate them into action—and more, action that is constructive, coherent, and cohesive in building the school and educating students. Planning is a critical piece of the process, but putting even team-devised plans into place can require collaborative navigating when different staffs and different organizations come together, especially within a school that is part of a complex and entrenched citywide bureaucracy.

Identifying potent entry points and the ability to act on them in creative ways are critical to effective, productive partnerships. The progress of such work generally relies heavily on the collaborative efforts and leadership of principals and organizational staff members—to look for and open points of entry into schools,

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[19] See the May 30, 2004, memorandum sent to organizational partners that summarizes the group discussion. Peter Kleinbard and Janice Hirota, "May 13, 2004, Meeting of NCHS Organizational Partners," Youth Development Institute, Fund for the City of New York.

bring organizational strengths to the fore, expect and model joint undertakings, and explore in ongoing ways the expansion and deepening of their partnerships, all for the benefit of their students. At the same time, when school plans go into implementation, the stance, imagination, and actions of principals seem to be critical in balancing the weight of schools and conventional practice, and in supporting organizations' role as integrated partners. This seems to be true even when organizations were major players during the planning period.

Developing "Natural" Entry Points for Organizational Partners

Partnerships' varying assets can lead to different areas of organizational focus and interest within their schools. At times, such focus is the result of joint decision-making between the partners, especially when the expertise, experience, and resources of the organization are seen as embedded in the very notion of their school. In addition to the thematic aspect, organizational participation can be prized when it is linked to other central school components, such as personalization or development of the organizational foundation of schools. Linkage to the core of the school often means the growth of the partnering organization's engagement over time as well, for example, when new challenges arise as the school adds grades and enlarges its student body and faculty. In these instances, staff members from partnering organizations often were key players in the planning teams, at times working with principals-to-be from the start or, at other times, helping to identify, socialize, and solidify partnerships with principals who joined the team or school late in the process.

Organizational Partners and the Theme Strategy. The NCHS initiative includes schools where the overall identity, pedagogic approach, and substantive framework are aligned. These are the components of what might be called the *theme strategy* of some New Century high schools. Such schools often provide hospitable venues for organizations' deep engagement in daily academic life when, for example, the theme directly relates to core organizational knowledge, resources, approaches to working with youth, and mission. In fact, at times it is the organization's interests that initially shape the school's theme strategy. Within this framework, schools differ widely in *how* the organizational and DoE partners employ their expertise to align subject areas broadly defined, pedagogy, and often school organization. That is, how a school creates and implements its theme as a strategy that aims to foster student engagement and learning, stimulate interest, create coherence and continuity throughout the school, build a school community and identity, and draw on organizational resources. For example:

> *Brooklyn Botanic Garden and Prospect Park Alliance,* co-organizational partners in the *Brooklyn Academy of Science and the Environment,* have brought field-based teaching and learning strategies, Park and Garden

field sites, and professional staff to the academy's science classes. Work here includes DoE and organizational staffs co-teaching classes in which students learn scientific thinking and how to do scientific research, including the hands-on use of scientific equipment in field experiments, data gathering and analysis, and report writing. Now in the school's second year, the organizational partners are helping to adapt the scientific research method for use by the humanities and social science classes and looking at ways to bring community environmental issues into the school experience.

In a different example, "water is the center of the school" at the *New York Harbor School*, where the *Urban Assembly* is the lead partner. The inter-disciplinary curriculum focuses on the waterways that comprise the New York Harbor and ranges from wooden boat building and design to maritime history and the application of navigational skills and sailing concepts. Students extend classroom science and social studies learning through in-depth study of local water quality and experiences with professional sailors, oystermen, and artists. The *South Street Seaport Museum* is a major partner in the school's academic enterprise, hosting classes three days a week, opening the museum's collections, and sharing staff and other resources, including the *Lettie G. Howard*, a 19th Century two-masted schooner.

From still a third approach, the *Roundabout Theatre Company* brings to bear its expertise and resources in helping to create, at the *Bronx Theatre High School,* a school-wide approach to teaching and learning that is framed by and implemented through the concept, disciplines, practices, and organization of the theatre. Indeed, framing and operating the school as a theatre company embeds Roundabout in the identity and structure of the school. The school's curriculum includes reading, writing, interpreting, staging, and presenting theatrical productions, and involves all facets of the theatre, from the business and administrative sides, to set and costume design and creation, to acting and direction.

Such clear fields of study—intertwining substantive content and pedagogic approaches—serve a variety of purposes. A field of study or theme can frame a school's teaching and learning enterprise, infusing a sense of continuity and coherence throughout the school day and across class curricula. It can create links between classroom work and the outside world by, for example, utilizing hands-on approaches employed by researchers, scientific technicians, or practicing artists, or posing real environmental, health, or social issues, or providing in-depth explorations through literature of the joys and quandaries of the human condition. A field of study can help endow a school and its students with a distinct identity.

Perhaps most important, a field of study aims to provide students with an entry point into the educational enterprise, re-exciting and re-engaging them in their own learning and providing inquiry tools for pursuit of their interests. This can be critical for those who have become alienated by negative experiences throughout their school careers. Such social and intellectual re-engagement is a central aim of the NCHS initiative.

Organizational Partners and Personalization. Small school practices go far beyond considerations of size alone. One aspect of the New Century small school philosophy can be seen in the inclusion of "personalized relationships" among its ten principles. This principle highlights: "staff knowledge about each student's social and family conditions, strengths, aspirations and needs"; a close, continuous relationship between each student and at least one adult in the school; and the involvement of at least one adult in coordinating the support for each student as he/she prepares for productive post-graduation endeavors. New Visions aims for small schools that: conduct individualized assessments of students' strengths and challenges; employ teaching and learning strategies that develop the confidence and competence of each student by actively engaging and stretching them; develop and implement curricula that deliver breadth of study that is personally relevant; put student needs at their centers; utilize processes that foster and ensure that students' individual and collective voices are consequential in their schools; and support adults who know students' needs and structure educational interventions to foster their capacity to meet academic standards and develop as effective citizens.[20]

New Visions also contracts with the Youth Development Institute to foster and support the application of youth development principles to the conceptualization and operation of New Century schools. "Youth development" refers to a way of working with young people that is rooted in research on adolescents and emphasizes their strengths, instead of their deficits. The approach looks to integrate community, school, and family resources in support of their youth. Key features of implementing this approach in a school include: a close, long-term (one or more years) relationship between each student and at least one adult in the school; expressions of high expectations for the work and future of each student; structured opportunities for students to have a voice in the operation of their school; structured opportunities for youth to participate in valued activities, such as community service; constructive, meaningful peer group relationships; and classes and activities that are designed to engage youth.[21]

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[20] Personal communication from Robert Hughes, President, New Visions for Public Schools.

[21] As part of their seminal work in the area, Karen J. Pittman and Michele Cahill argue that "[P]romoting youth development is a central element in an educational reform strategy. Much of what is at the heart of the changes being enacted as a part of the school reform movement addresses the concern that schools must be more responsive, more participatory, more relevant institutions; that they must, in order to be effective agents for academic learning, be transformed into environments that are more conducive to students' overall development." The authors go on to argue that the development of academic competence (including knowledge, problem-solving skills, appreciation for life-long learning, and so forth) and other competencies "hinge upon the adequate fulfillment of adolescents' basic needs. *(continued on following page)*

Personalization and youth development approaches overlap, support, and extend each other. Together they call for teaching-and-learning environments that foster students' engagement in academics, self-discovery, accountability, leadership capacity and practice, and development of interests, skills, and knowledge. Traditionally-trained educators, however, often lack experience in conceptualizing and integrating such practices into the work of schools. An organizational partner with experience in personalization and youth development can help create venues and processes that enhance and support students' disciplined engagement with endeavors that intellectually, academically, socially, and personally stretch them. Such organizations tend to grasp the dynamic intersection of personalization and youth development tenets with academic and social growth. At the same time, organizational staffs may also be learning, together with DoE educators, how best to weave these components together within the school day and environment.

There are a range of illustrative examples of such practices. Organizational partners can bring their experience and expertise to their schools in the development of regular advisory classes, which provide a specific, concrete vehicle for implementing personalization and youth development strategies in ways that foster supportive educational environments. Advisory classes regularly bring together students with an adult in the school and aim to foster individuals' awareness of self and others, promote group participation, and build relationships and a sense of community. Advisories also can promote, among other aspects, high expectations, student leadership capacity, and a sense of accountability to and for the group.[22] The effect of such work goes beyond students as well. Developing advisory often includes professional development for educators. Some examples where organizational partners are working to develop and support advisory include:

> *FoodChange* (formerly Community Resource Food Center), organizational partner at *Food and Finance High School*, has taken the lead in the development of advisory classes. The organization's on-site staff person, who teaches advisory herself, engaged the Youth Development Institute to provide bi-weekly professional development on advisory for the school's faculty.
>
> A social worker from *Brooklyn Psychiatric Centers, Inc.*, is the on-site full-time Director of Mental Health Services at the *High School for Public Service*. With three MSW interns, she provides individual, group, and family counseling as well as conflict resolution and mediation. She created the

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[21] *(continued)* The need for safety, structure, membership, strong personal relationships, opportunities to contribute and develop a sense of self-worth, independence and control over important decisions, and mastery." See Karen J. Pittman and Michele Cahill, *Pushing the Boundaries of Education: The Implications of a Youth Development Approach to Education Policies, Structures and Collaborations,* a paper commissioned by the Council of Chief State School Officers, July 1992, pp. 4 and 6.

[22] Advisory is sometimes also called "family group". Depending on the school, advisory classes are taught by DoE classroom teachers, principals, and organizational staff members.

framework and curriculum for the school's advisory system and supports each staff member who teaches an advisory section. She is a member, with other school staff, of the Pupil Personnel Team.

At times, the implicit link between advisory and academic achievement, personal growth, and high expectations is made explicit:

East Side House Settlement relocated its Youth Leadership Program, with its staff of three, to a space within *Mott Haven Village Preparatory High School*. The program—now called the College Preparation and Leadership Program—brings strong college and academic orientations and deep experience in youth development to the school's advisory program, individualized student support, and professional development agenda on the integration of personalization and academic rigor.

Organizational partners and school leadership intentionally intertwine academic, personalization, and youth development efforts beyond advisory as well. In the illustrative examples of theme strategies above and organizational partners and specialized resources below, organizations are deeply involved in creating new intellectual foci and classroom pedagogy that will engage youth and broaden their perspectives. At times, schools also look to other efforts to create conducive teaching-and-learning environments. The principal and organizational partner in one school, for example, asked YDI for assistance in developing physical classroom spaces that effectively invite student participation and ways to showcase student work. Such efforts can be basic elements in designing environments where youth feel safe as they tackle classes such as mathematics that some see as challenging and at times intimidating. In another school, the organizational partner plans and leads regular literacy and writing units, but allows students to select the unit themes from a list of choices. The organizational staff thus weaves together student interests, participation in shaping the focus of the unit, and rigorous academic work.

At times, the role of organizational partners vis-à-vis personalization and youth development stands out in schools that serve targeted groups of students. In the following instances, there is an alignment among the design and mission of the school, the strengths and needs of the student population, explicit aims for students' academic, social, and personal achievement, and organizational expertise and experience.

The *Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services* (CASES) brings to bear its experience with court-involved youth in helping to shape *Community Prep High School*, a bridge school for students moving from custodial to community high schools. CASES conceptualized the school

and helps shape and implements, in an ongoing way, the school's emphasis on developing students' academic and social skills, creating supportive, consistent, and demanding relationships between adults and students, and fostering a daily fabric where community rules and supports are interwoven. The CASES director of Community Prep and the DoE principal, full-time co-leaders in the school, work closely together out of side-by-side offices.

In a similar vein, *Good Shepherd Services* (GSS) jointly operates the *South Brooklyn Community High School* with the Region 8 Instructional Superintendency. The school builds on a GSS program that worked in collaboration with the DoE for over 20 years. The school—as the program before it—targets students who live in the community and have dropped out of school or have records of extensive high school truancy. A GSS director and DoE principal jointly oversee the school, which exists in a stand-alone building that was built as a school by GSS. Each student has an individualized relationship with a GSS advocate counselor, who advocates on behalf of and counsels the student, acts as a link between the school and the student's parents, and works with the student's teachers—all in an effort to support each student's academic and social growth. GSS's experience with this group has been critical in creating a learning environment that is responsive to students' past educational experiences and current needs.

Organizational Partners and the Development of Schools. From the start in some partnerships, organizational partners undertake tasks to support the development of schools as strong, well-functioning concerns, including support for the principal as instructional leader. For example:

In advance of opening *Mott Haven Village Preparatory High School*, the organizational partner—*East Side House Settlement* (ESHS)—joined the walkthrough of South Bronx High School to participate in decisions about space for the new small school, co-located in the large high school building with two other New Century high schools and the large, phasing-out school. Throughout the opening period, ESHS worked with the principal, often assisting with operational and logistical issues, and during the first year, ESHS paid for a full-time administrative assistant at the school. Such participation continues and is threaded throughout the fabric of the school. From the beginning and ongoing, for example, ESHS has provided the school with extensive technology support and training. The ESHS assistant executive director is the point person for the partnership, symbolizing the importance of the school to the organization. During the early months, before the arrival of the assistant principal, the ESHS administrator was at the school on a daily basis to assist the principal, and

was always on-site as the person in charge when the principal was attending off-site meetings. As a result, the organizational administrator came to know all the teachers, their classrooms, and many of the students—and they to know him.

The *Urban Assembly* (UA) has created a role for itself as institutional support for its eight New Century high schools, including the Bronx Academy of Letters, the New York Harbor School, and the Urban Assembly School for Law and Justice. At each of its schools, a full-time on-site UA staff person, supported by central UA staff, works with a core group of collaborative partners in the public and private sectors to organize a rich calendar of activities for its students, faculties, and community members. At times, such external partners come to play pivotal roles in the schools, as the South Street Seaport Museum has with the New York Harbor School or Cravath, Swaine and Moore with the Urban Assembly School for Law and Justice. In addition, the Urban Assembly supports an instructional network that links administrators and faculty members of its New Century high schools to share promising curricula and practices.[23]

Providing Specialized Resources as Entry Points for Organizations

Organizational partners can develop initial entry points into schools by bringing to bear particular expertise and resources to important but often specifically defined—and therefore sometimes more limited—aspects of the school. When an organization's participation is defined by such specialization, its opportunities for expanding its engagement may be limited by, for example, the organization's capacity or interests or the weight of traditional expectations. For example, during *Bronx International High School's* first two years as a New Century school, an arts instructor from the *Bronx Museum of Art* participated as a member of one of the school's interdisciplinary teaching teams and worked with faculty to develop and co-teach arts projects in a variety of classes across the curriculum, including biology, math, and advisory. The school, which admits only students who are recent immigrants, views the visual arts as an important communications medium among students from a wide variety of linguistic backgrounds.

At times, initial entry points can lead to larger, although still limited organizational presences in schools. Thus, *New York Outward Bound's* wilderness expeditions, utilizing the organization's camp in the Adirondack Mountains, have been important introductions to *Bronx Guild* for students and faculty, creating common, collaborative

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[23] Other Urban Assembly New Century schools include: Academy for Careers in Sports, The Urban Assembly Academy for History & Citizenship for Young Men, The Urban Assembly Media High School, The Urban Assembly School for Applied Math & Science, and The Urban Assembly School of Design & Construction.

experiences and launching the school's expeditionary learning approach to all academic subjects. Such expeditions have helped establish the grounds for the Outward Bound staff person to offer professional development at the school on a one-to-one basis with teachers, provide some group sessions to the ninth-grade teachers, and participate with the principal in co-designing and co-facilitating a few school-wide professional development sessions. The Outward Bound staff person also has begun leading the literacy portion of the after-school program, extending work with students begun at Outward Bound's summer literacy camp.

In addition, some organizational partners look to other strategies to expand their influence. One strategy intentionally builds on the value of working directly with students by, for example, modeling behavior that reflects youth development tenets and letting students' responses and achievements "speak" to the approach's effectiveness. For example, the direct focus of the *South Bronx Overall Economic Development Organization* (SOBRO) at *Global Enterprise Academy* is largely on the school's after-school program. Here, three DoE teachers and a SOBRO staff member are team-teaching a course entitled "Our Earth: Today, Yesterday, Tomorrow"; through the teachers' involvement, the program can offer credits in math and science to students for rigorous project-based work. At the same time, the program provides a venue where teachers can practice youth development and project-based pedagogy as an education tool. As a result, the teachers are beginning to turn to SOBRO's project-based activities and use of youth development principles as exemplars when creating and implementing their own in-school curricula, thereby incorporating and modeling approaches from SOBRO's after-school work into the regular school day.

Discovering/Creating Unexpected Points of Entry for Organizations

When viable entries into their schools are not immediately evident in school designs, organizational partners often must work to discover or create such points of entry, especially given the traditional weight and structure of schools, the training and experiences of many DoE educators, the innovative nature of NCHS partnerships, and the sheer volume of demands on principals and teachers in small schools. At the same time, practicing partnership relies on constructive efforts of both partners, and often requires that principals act to counter the weight of schools.

During the three planning and implementation periods to date, New Visions and others have provided various supports to organizational and school leaders to help legitimate partnership and identify and develop potential entry points into practice. For example, from October 2002—June 2004, New Visions hosted seven principal-organizational partner gatherings meant to bring partners together from across all schools for information, professional development, and sharing of

approaches and experiences. The events included workshops on such topics as adolescent literacy, positive school cultures, preparation for Regents examinations, classroom management practices, and school system operational and regulatory issues. Throughout, the events reflected and underscored New Visions' expectations for joint involvement of partners in the knotty issues and serious work of educating youth. In another approach, staff members from New Visions and the Youth Development Institute developed an assets inventory process during the initial year of school implementation to facilitate organizations' identification and framing of their school-relevant strengths. In part, the process aimed to help organizations delineate aspects of their own programs, for example, personalization strategies, youth development approaches, or meaningful parent involvement, that could form the basis of significant school roles. Such aspects are often taken-for-granted by organizational staffs and not viewed as potentially distinctive contributions to partnership discussions. School partners, on the other hand, may have little experience in developing student leadership capacity, community outreach, or engaging families—and given little thought to intertwining these with academic work.

In addition, unexpected entry points for organizational partners can arise during especially busy school periods, such as the opening of school each fall, as discussed below.

Organizational Partners and Opening Days. For many New Century actors, as with personnel in more traditional schools, opening days mean a whirlwind of demands, logistical crises, and tasks beyond any planning and expectations. Such a whirlwind is, of course, intensified with the inaugural year of each New Century high school—when the start of school means implementing a brand new school—as well as each subsequent year until the school reaches full size. DoE and organizational partners may have worked out detailed plans that focus on organizational roles in, for example, field studies, advisory, theme-related classes, community engagement, and other areas. But the opening of school brings its own unforeseen rhythms and pressures—and at times unanticipated entry points for organizational partners into school life.

Stories abound about the bumpy road to opening a new school—there are not enough desks and chairs on the first day or even the first week, phones are unconnected, computers don't arrive for weeks in a school with a technology theme. But there are dirty hallways, leaks, and numerous operational snafus. Teachers work to make their classrooms and school ready for students, as well as arranging—at times with organizational partners—orientation sessions and welcoming "town hall" meetings. At times, opening weeks and months put pressures and demands on partnerships. For example, principals encounter an onslaught of tasks, decisions, meetings, and mini-crises, and in some schools, put aside the development of the

partnership strategy. In other instances, organizational partners find unexpected demands that not only do *not* match their plans, but are beyond what they see as reasonable expectations. A partnering staff person says, for example, "Cleaning toilets and getting rid of mice is *not* what we do…. We had no warning that we'd be dealing with mice in the school!" Yet in some places, organizational partners have the capacity, opportunity, and initiative to move quickly and deftly to fill early gaps and answer needs. Based on on-site interviews, some organizational staff members speedily enter the hectic activity:

> The first two months in a brand-new small school. Everyone's working to make things move as smoothly as possible. Teachers are busy getting their classrooms organized and rolling out curricula. Two staff members from partnering organizations are at the school on a daily basis, each close to 100 per cent time, grabbing space to work because the school's much too crowded and there's no office—not even a closet—for them. Despite the planning and pre-opening work, there are glitches. Early on, the copier breaks down, sending partnering staff running back to their own organizations—thankfully close by—to make copies. There are no school aides, a fact that unexpectedly translates into regular lunch duty for one organizational staff person. In addition, organizational staff look around and realize that the hallway bulletin boards need postings to welcome students and proclaim the new school. But, where's the chart paper? Another task: regular runs to buy needed supplies.
>
> In the meantime, the principal constantly is being pulled out of the school for mandatory meetings. Without a space of their own, the organizational staff members are spending a lot of time in the principal's complex. This means they are there to answer questions, talk with students who come in to see the principal, help respond to crises, interact with teachers, run out for the tenth time in a day to make more copies.
>
> In the midst of all this, one organizational staff person recalls with a laugh, "I'm thinking to myself—Is this what we're supposed to be doing? Is this what it means to be a partner in a New Century high school?" But there's no time to ponder roles. Where are the textbooks? Call the publishers—wheedle and demand.

Such engagement helps counter an objection often raised about organizations: they can't be equal partners because they aren't in schools on a day-in-day-out basis and therefore don't grasp the texture, rhythms, demands, and satisfactions of daily school life. Moreover, for organizational partners with flexibility, time in the school, the ability to respond to perceived needs, and commitment to the work, such undertakings can allow full and rapid immersion into a very real side of school life.

Still, there is much more to effective partnership than troubleshooting. It worked in this case because organizational staff people were at the school full-time, saw what needed to be done, and did it *and* because the principal was comfortable and supported having them at the school, interacting with students, teachers, and staff, and employing their resourcefulness. It worked because of the mutual commitment of both partners to the effective operation of their school for the benefit of the students. This example occurred within the context of a long planning history and a shared forward look by the principal and organizational partners to the many areas of joint work that their partnership envisioned. In another school that also enjoys a full partnership between the principal and the organization, when there was a burglary early in the first year, the organizational partner arrived to help; when the school needed a brochure, the partner took care of it; when computers were needed, the partner raised the funds. The organization's ongoing stance, now in the school's third year: "We do whatever needs to be done—it doesn't matter what it is. Isn't *that* what it means to be a partner? This is our school."

Organizational Partners and Foundation Building. Initiative expectations for personalized teaching, supportive school cultures, and, in schools with theme strategies, implementation of themes open entry points for collaborative work among DoE and organizational partners. But plans to meet these expectations may assume capacities and supports that do not exist in the school, or at least not to the necessary degree. In these instances, organizations may become involved in building the pedagogic, thematic, and personalization foundations as part of the process of putting organizational plans into place. For example, staff members from a range of organizational partners report that they themselves as well as teachers in their schools—many of whom are first-time high school teachers—can be unprepared for working with students who not only have below-grade literacy and numeracy skills, but lack the study habits, planning ability, and critical thinking skills for high school-level work. The same may be true in terms of a lack of experience and knowledge for working with special needs students.

In addition, and perhaps more relevant to organizations' desire to support particular pedagogic and content approaches, teachers may lack grounding in the substantive content or ways of thinking in a school employing a theme strategy. For example, teachers may not understand how to employ experiential learning, project-based learning, or hands-on field studies as means to make classroom work come alive. In a parallel way, organizational staff members may use such content and pedagogic approaches, but be uncertain how to apply them within a school context. As a result, organizations sometimes become involved in a wider range of activities than originally planned in an effort to establish the knowledge and practice platform—among DoE and organizational staff—for their planned work. Such undertakings include, for example:

- Providing group or individual professional development in areas of organizational strength, such as ways to utilize particular arts or socio-cultural frameworks for curriculum development and implementation
- Facilitating or modeling teaching strategies such as team teaching and project-based learning
- Creating and participating on a curriculum planning team that includes variously the principal, subject teachers, the organizational partner, and other collaborating organizations
- Working with students directly and letting their engagement and accomplishments demonstrate the educational and developmental value of the organization's work in such areas as docent training, community projects, and arts-infused curricula.

In addition, school-related staff members in an organization can play the role of intermediary within their own organization, bringing school values, practices, and quandaries to the attention of organizational staff. In such a role, school-related staff can, for example, help colleagues learn how to work with high school students on a long-term basis, stimulate organizational thinking on additional ways to work with the school, help internalize new practices developed through the school endeavor, and push the development of new ways to approach teaching and learning.

Organizational Partners and Supporting School Development. As partnering organizations come to realize the great demands in developing their schools as organizations, they identify entry points and contribute time, energy, and ingenuity to such work. Especially in the early months and years of a new small school, when there are few faculty members and there is a tremendous amount of work to be done, teachers—and in the New Century high schools, organizational partners—tend to wear multiple hats, often undertaking activities and responsibilities that, in more traditional schools, would not be open to them. Such tasks might range from participation in initial curriculum planning across the school for the first four or seven years of the school (seven years in a sixth to twelfth grade school), to organizing student recruitment activities, to conducting student and family orientations to the school, to maintaining calendars for use of common spaces shared with other schools in the building. In addition, when a school is co-located with other schools, a situation that most New Century high schools experience, principals, teachers, and other DoE staff members are involved in meetings, committees, and councils both within their own schools and at the building level, with personnel from the other schools. Within this context, organizational staff can take on development and support tasks, including the following:

- Developing and implementing particular aspects of the curriculum such as internships, community action projects, and research projects with experts in the field
- Creating links between the public and private sectors, including the engagement of other organizations to bring their own expertise to the school's classroom work and fund raising
- Participating in the school leadership team
- Assisting in the development of the comprehensive education plan
- Assisting in recruiting students and faculty
- Assisting in supporting broad parental involvement in the school, including at times help in creating a parent association or school leadership team
- Modeling strategies or mentoring new principals—when the organization has greater experience—in dealing with the school system bureaucracy or in small school practices.

V PARTNERSHIP CHALLENGES

At the school level, the New Century partnership strategy calls for staffs with different training, skills, and experiences who work for different institutions, each with its own norms and values, to come together and forge new perspectives and practices. When fully implemented, the strategy implies essential changes in traditional approaches to school structures, governance, teaching and learning practices, personalization approaches, and social supports. In order to enact these broad-stroke aims, educators on the ground—the DoE and organizational staff members who work in the schools—must devise new ways of thinking about, defining, and practicing their roles. As with all complex reforms, when these staffs begin carrying out the initiative principles and the more particular but still abstract school plans, they encounter a range of challenges.

Based on field data, the paper develops categories of challenges as on-the-ground partnering staffs work to redefine traditional roles, create new approaches, and negotiate and institutionalize interactions. Here, as in other aspects of New Century schools and their partnerships, there is variation and evolution. Some partnerships are moving surely toward collaboration across several school arenas; others are moving more slowly and with uncertainty; still others have been limited in their engagement, either deliberately or through lack of capacity; and a few have ceased to exist at all. The examples below are illustrative and represent work that is ongoing and evolving.

New and Redefined Roles

The new schools are shaped by and reflect new ways of approaching and supporting teaching and learning. A critical component of this effort has to do with the work of staff members to enact their roles and responsibilities within a context of multiple players and new demands and opportunities.

Undertaking New Roles, New Expectations. The implementation of personalized cultures and approaches to teaching and learning provides an apt illustration of the new standards that school and organizational partners encounter in their New Century schools. As discussed earlier, providing advisory classes is a frequently mentioned strategy for implementing youth development and personalization tenets: advisory seems to be a specific and concrete way to translate an abstract idea into practice, is part of New Visions' planning sessions for developing new schools, and some school staffs believe it is a mandatory component of the initiative. At the same time, conceptualizing and teaching advisory classes can be a demanding stretch for teachers and at times for organizational staff. Teachers often lack training in and experience with advisory and with the concept of institutionalized personalization more generally; they tend not to see teaching advisory as part of their roles as teachers with subject-specific classes. Their uneasiness surfaces at times in worries that close relationships with students in advisory make it difficult to maintain the discipline and standards necessary for rigorous teaching and learning. In some instances, for example, the advisors are responsible for regular outreach to and interaction with their advisees' parents. Others are uncomfortable with the idea of facilitating "personal" discussions among students or dealing with emotional or otherwise sticky situations that such conversations may bring. For example, advisory classes have been venues for talking about sexual health, tension-filled relationships among particular students, and ways to deal with gang activities. Principals and teachers who are ill-at-ease with such possibilities may not perceive advisory as valuable or may lack the experience to create advisory curricula. Advisory classes in some schools are, in fact, just study halls or more traditional homerooms, where school announcements are made.[24]

As a result, advisory is at times a natural opening for the expertise and experience of organizational partners. For example, a professor observes advisory classes and provides feedback to teachers; a social worker develops an advisory curriculum and supports its implementation; and a teaching artist helps devise projects that integrate

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[24] The Youth Development Institute, with the support of New Visions, provides a range of supports for shaping and teaching advisory, including broad overviews in introductory workshops, on-site sessions at a school or group of co-located schools (a campus), and a structured series of more intensive sessions, based on a verbal contract with the school, to develop a school-wide approach to advisory. The purpose of such professional development is not only to provide advisory techniques but increasingly to support teachers and organizational staff in re-conceptualizing their roles, grasping the links between personalization and effective teaching and learning, and creating their own advisory frameworks, curricula, and activities. As is true of the support of New Visions and the DoE, YDI has been refining its approach over the course of the New Century initiative. The work at YDI currently includes developing a clear statement of the goals and expected outcomes of advisory.

art work with advisory discussions. Such work can be effective as organizational staff model, support, structure, and help demystify personalization approaches. But work on personalization strategies within the structure of the school day can be a stretch for organizations as well. Organizations may be skilled at implementing personalization strategies in more informal out-of-school arenas, but encounter new challenges in dealing with the kinds of concerns that teachers bring or working to unite personalization strategies with schools' academic endeavors.

Within this context, the principal can be crucial in supporting the work of teachers and the partnering organization—by imparting an understanding of the potential of advisory as a personalization tool and venue and legitimizing and "backing up" organizational efforts with, for example, support for advisory planning time, provision of professional development on advisory, and explicit expectations for personalization work. At times, there is growth of both DoE and organizational staffs as they develop ways to align and intersect academic and personalization strands. This alignment occurs, for example, when these staffs develop collaborative approaches that link literacy skills and youth development principles, such as a newspaper project that gives voice to student interests or a children's book creation project that highlights community when the students read their books to children in an elementary school class.[25]

Shifting and Expanding Roles. The partnership strategy can also pressure a shifting of roles as part of instilling reform. At times these shifts occur at the *institutional level,* where organizations may alter or expand the roles they play within the school. Such a shift can occur when, for example:

> The school expands and organizational partners take on additional undertakings, such as developing community work, research projects, or internships for students as they reach the tenth or eleventh grades. Or organizations are involved in engaging others who can bring additional resources to the school, often to meet newly recognized needs or ways to expand or strengthen school efforts. This might mean, for example, bringing in a consultant to assist in building school culture or identifying organizations that become collaborating partners in the school.
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> Organizational partners recognize and develop new niches in which they can work to the benefit of their schools. In one school with organizational co-lead partners, for example, the organizations' primary focus has been on teaching and learning—building curricula, co-teaching in classrooms,

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[25] These projects were developed through the Dialogues on Adolescent Literacy, a program developed by YDI and New Visions. The Dialogues bring together teams of teachers and organizational partner staff members from New Century high schools for a series of workshops in which they reflect on their practice, examine research, and develop collaborative approaches to improving student literacy.

creating a field studies approach, and so forth. Throughout, organizational staff members have supported the institutional development of their school. In the second year, however, these efforts have become more intentional and focused, and include, for instance, an effort to build a "partners' council" of non-profit community organizations. The aim here is to expand the base of knowledge, experiences, and opportunities for the school and its students; create an intentional network of organizations that are aware of and ready to support the school; and root the school more deeply within the non-profit sector of the community.

In other instances, shifts in roles happen at the *individual level* of DoE educators and organizational staff members. This might occur when teachers and organizational staff members are asked to change their practices and, in the process, shift their roles. Here, by pushing the need for new skills and bridging individuals from across institutions, the partnership strategy can force the development of new ways of thinking about and enacting educational efforts. In one school, for example, some classes are team taught, with classroom teachers and organizational teachers working together, a demonstration of integrated partnership. But, teachers from both institutions find the work demands a rethinking of their experience and training—one side used to solo teaching of semester-long classes in a set classroom, the other used to teaching students during a one-time or short-term series of classes, often at the organization's facility. Each side can see the added value of team teaching, but the practice has required meetings to plan, coordinate, and reframe lessons for team teaching days, as well as rethink teaching styles. In this instance, direct support to meet teaching challenges has come from organizational staff.

At other times, partnership opens the way for legitimating and incorporating organizational expertise within the regular school day. It has also pushed the development of new organizational capacities. For example, organizational staff members in a school have undertaken the teaching of health issues, college orientation, and test preparation in classroom settings. But, the organizational supervisor says the practice places great stress on staff members who are skilled in leading informal discussions in after-school settings, but unused to taking on what they define as more formal teaching tasks.

Clarifying and Negotiating Roles. When implemented, the radical strategy of partnership at the core of New Century high schools requires that actors on the ground clarify and negotiate the parameters of their roles. This can happen over time as actors work out in practice the ways that redefined roles fit together within a larger strategy. At times, for example, the teacher role is reconfigured and aspects are pulled out and undertaken by different groups of actors. In one school, the DoE teaching staff focuses on the academic side of a student's school involvement and

organizational staff members counsel students and advocate on their behalf vis-à-vis teachers and administrators. If a student is unruly in a classroom, the teacher may call for the counselor to talk with the student, or the student him/herself may ask for the counselor. In regular meetings with her/his counselor, a student may raise concerns involving a particular teacher and ask for help in figuring out what to do. Reconfiguration of the teacher role also occurs in situations where organizational staff members are not involved, although perhaps not to such a degree. For example, in one school, the advisory teachers are the main contacts with parents. Each advisory teacher pulls together each advisee's grades from all courses to discuss with parents or calls home when there is an unexcused absence. In this way, the teacher can gain whole pictures of his/her advisees and develop close relationships with the students and their parents.

Both of these models alter the traditional role of teachers and require a rethinking of the role of classroom teachers vis-à-vis their students. These can be complicated situations, especially the first model, where a classroom teacher, for example, comments on how at times students play counselors and teachers off against each other or undermine a teacher's role in the classroom with taunts about needing help to control the class. Although teachers in both situations described above understand the logic of organizing their schools on these lines, it is not necessarily easy to reframe their own roles. Teachers sometimes feel, for example, that students' close relationships with other adults—fostered by institutional structures—impede the development of those relationships with students in their own classes, relationships that they miss. At the same time, the new approaches, underpinned by the partnership strategy, recognize the multiple aspects of developing youth and allow schools more fully to stimulate and support academic, social, and emotional growth.

In other instances, clarification is important because school staff members are unsure of the role of the organization in the school. For example, teachers know that a person is from the partnering organization, but are not clear about her or his role. Or, when that role has expanded over time, DoE staff may know some but not all of the ways that the organization contributes to the school. At other times, teachers do not have much knowledge about the organization itself and its mission, audience, and scope of programs. When this occurs, it is difficult to link the role of particular staff members with their home organization or why and what it means for the organization to partner in the school.

When there is strong partner integration across many arenas of the school, principals and organizational partners together may discover the need to clarify their roles for the multiple publics in a school. At times, the apparent "seamlessness" of a partnership may actually be confusing when there is little clarity about who is doing what and why; in part, examples here have arisen particularly when

questions of authority and purview are at issue. In one school, for example, some faculty members were increasingly confused and troubled by the lack of clarity about the place of the organization, especially when organizational staff seemed to take on traditional principal tasks, such as facilitating faculty meetings when the principal had to be absent. Here, the issue did not occur between principal and partner, but rather in how teachers were to interpret even the sporadic handing off of such responsibilities. What, some asked, is the responsibility and authority of the partner? What is the relationship between the organization and teachers?

The Partnership Strategy and Evolving Schools

Developing Processes and Structures. DoE and organizational partners inevitably encounter quandaries as they try to develop the school structures and processes that will facilitate and promote partnership and also help shape roles. The following queries are striking because they are raised by partners in strong partnerships, and perhaps only occur as practical matters in such partnerships. The reflecting that is illustrated here, in fact, may prod further evolution of collaborative dynamics.

> How can we know the same thing at the same time? We talk with each other all the time, but something can happen just after a conversation or we think we've told each other something but haven't.

> We can't make every decision together and we trust each other to make the right decision alone. But we know that as partners there are decisions we should make—and want to make—together. So, we need to figure out which decisions can be made independently; which decisions really fall more into the DoE or [organizational] side and can be made independently but with consultation; and which decisions need to be made jointly.

Looking in Two Directions. Principals and involved organizational staff members find themselves at times in the role of intermediary link between the school and the organizational partner. The ability to look in two directions helps facilitate the partnership, but it also adds complexity to staff members' roles. In one instance, for example, the partnering organization plays an important role in providing professional development through classroom observations and feedback to teachers. The principal values the partner's work, but it also has meant another layer of complication when scheduling classes. The principal must negotiate changes in class schedules, impelled by the need to coordinate class times across several co-located schools, not only with fellow principals but also with organizational staff. In a different example, the principal attends supervisory staff meetings at the

organization—an effort in part to foster the understanding and commitment of organizational staff to the school and to reinforce the place of the school as a major undertaking and important component of the organization.

Organizational staff members involved in New Century partnerships also must look toward the school and organization. For example, they find themselves trying to make intelligible not only the work at the school but also the demands, rewards, and constraints of the work to organizational superiors and board members who do not know the work directly. These staff report encountering often difficult questions about the organization's role within the school, the meaning of integrated partnership, and the challenges of influencing seemingly entrenched practices of schools and the school system.

Developing New Organizational Partner Aims. At times, organizations develop new questions and aims as their work in schools progresses. Again, such reflection can lead to new roles such as work with a planning team in efforts to extend the school's theme to new areas of the school curriculum or projects that intentionally integrate youth development and literacy-building work. Examples of such questions include:

- How to implement organizational or professional standards within a school setting? What's reasonable?
- How to open discussions with the principal and teachers regarding student behavior and academic achievement in ways that are seen as legitimate and constructive?
- How to meet unanticipated or expanded needs in the school?
- How to bring to the table the organizational aims for partnership participation—such as the expansion of staff work with adolescents, linkage between schools and communities, and outreach to new potential audiences for organizational program?

Challenges for Organizational Partners

The New Century initiative, through the partnership strategy, opens doors for organizations to participate in schools in ways that differ fundamentally from previous roles, including the possibility to initiate and enact meaningful functions in the school's academic mission and life, help shape school culture, and participate in governance decisions and organizational development. Partnership offers the opportunity to participate fully in the central institution charged with educating and preparing youth for adulthood.

But there is a difference between the mandate and the ability to carry out the role. One challenge for organizations in this shift of roles is the establishment of legitimacy in the eyes of DoE actors, including principals, teachers, regional staff, and central policy makers. Resistance to the partnership strategy is evident in arguments that organizations "can't have a say because they don't know what a school day is like; they're not here day in and day out" or that DoE staff are, in the end, the ones who will be held accountable for students' educations. In this view, the weight of accountability means that ultimately principals and teachers must make school-day decisions.

Chafing Against Limited Roles. At times, organizations play much more limited roles in their schools than they anticipated or wish, often because principals use the extra vote—grounded in the weight of the school and conventional practice—and determine the extent of organizational participation. Instances here include:

- Limitation of organizational efforts to out-of-school activities, such as after-school and bridge programs,[26] thereby precluding real participation in the shape and content of the school's academic endeavors and approaches to youth-centered school culture and personalization
- Inclusion in school-day activities that are highly circumscribed such as assisting teachers in hands-on projects, but, as one principal stated, as a "consultant and not as a partner"; working one-on-one with selected teachers in curriculum development, but not being allowed to provide school-wide professional development; or helping to implement a program but only by following a curriculum developed by DoE staff alone.
- Exclusion from participation in governance, policy, personnel, and other decision making arenas that form the structural underpinnings of the school.

As time passes in such schools, organizational partners may aim to develop strategies to extend their spheres of participation and influence, or, in some instances, may begin pondering whether to continue in the partnership.

Experiencing Multiple Expectations. At times, organizational partners are overwhelmed by school expectations and demands, especially in areas such as grant writing and fund raising. Non-profit organizations often operate close to the bone; in addition, their budgets are often comprised of program-specific resources, with little leeway. They simply do not have "extra" staff time to assign to unexpected needs, even when they want to be responsive. In one partnership, two organizations

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[26] Bridge programs generally occur just before the start of school, might last two or three days, and introduce entering ninth-grade students to the school, faculty, organizational partner staff, and each other. They are a way to support students as they enter into the next phase of their education.

act as co-lead partners, taking collaborative responsibility for the school and the partnership with DoE staff. From this perspective, one organizational member says, "There's so much to do; I don't know how schools do it where there's only *one* [lead] partner"—the situation, of course, for the great majority of New Century partnerships.

Encountering the School System: Policy and Bureaucratic Underpinnings. Organizational partners face a variety of challenges in dealing with the school system relating both to the policy and bureaucratic underpinnings of the system as well as its style of operation.

The New York City school system, as is true of public education generally in the United States, is not set up to recognize or accommodate non-profit organizations as school-level partners. Instead, underlying policy and bureaucratic structures reinforce a hierarchical system that looks to credentialed professionals to educate the city's young. Such structures underpin and reinforce the weight of traditional perspectives, described earlier, on the meaning of high school education—what that education looks like, who implements it, and how it is delivered.

As a result, organizational staff members often run into rules and bureaucratic structures that undercut their work and legitimacy as partners who are broadly integrated into the development and on-going educational enterprise of their schools. Such rules tend to assign, explicitly or implicitly, sole accountability to Department of Education staff for students' progress, development, and safety, a presumption that greatly frustrates many organizational staff members and goes counter to the heart of the partnership strategy. What is actually co-leadership often does not get recognized as such. Even at levels of less complete integration, organizational staff members are blocked from full participation in hiring teachers and principals, disciplinary hearings, and assessing student work. They also are not allowed to be alone with students during the school day; a DoE employee must always be present. These limitations can prompt skepticism among DoE school leaders and faculty members about the legitimacy of organizational partners' roles and authority.

The school system's complex bureaucratic character affects the work of organizational staff in other, more specific, ways as well. Although staff members are not surprised by the system's challenges, they still are dismayed by the ability of the system to complicate teaching endeavors. For example, the implementation of organizational partners' roles in classroom life can be beset with unexpected logistical challenges. Thus, in one instance, organizational partners found themselves dealing with bus schedules to transport students to field study sites and organizing bag lunches when it became clear that the transitions from school to field and back to school required more time in practice than allotted in planned schedules. In

another school, the use of hospital sites and resources, planned for early integration into class sessions, was stymied initially by the need to deal with multiple layers of regulations and permissions. In still another school, the technology-based arts curriculum was delayed by the non-arrival of school computers.

Beyond the logistics of particular classes, organizational partners are astonished at the application of rules and demands that are very difficult for small schools to meet. For example, when a school administrator is called to a mandatory, out-of-building meeting, it is the principal who must go in a small school. Large high schools with large staffs, on the other hand, can juggle tasks among many administrators, including specialized assistant principals who are responsible for various instructional, administrative, and operational undertakings.

Encountering the School System: Operational Style. In addition, organizational staff members note differences in assumptions and expectations among DoE and non-profit staffs. For example, non-profit organizations that provide educational or cultural programs to the public have to line up offerings a year in advance. Then, because their audiences are not ensured, these programs must organize publicity, community outreach and mailings, and other information dissemination well in advance of the event. Organizations often encourage staff members to develop innovative and entrepreneurial thinking in order to develop fresh takes on standard offerings or create totally new undertakings. This allows staff to bring inventive perspectives to schools. But when they do, staff members can encounter frustration at the system's lack of support for new efforts, its counter-current to long-term planning, and its seeming rigidity.

V | PARTNERSHIP as LEVER for REFORM

Translation of the New Century partnership strategy into action has been an evolving process. At the moment, as discussed above, the practice of partnership varies in multiple ways across the initiative, including the depth and breadth of practice. But based on partnerships to date, one finds an essential challenge and potential at the core of the strategy. The New Century strategy entails simultaneously building partnerships and creating effective small schools—of perceiving partnership, within the context of small school practice, as a vital means to graduating youth with promising prospects. Enacting integrated, school-level partnerships between DoE educators and organizational staff requires redressing the weight of conventional practice and opening space for a non-school-system partner—a non-profit organization—to undertake joint responsibility, ownership, and accountability for the school and its students. It requires reframing the

means and meaning of the high school educational enterprise—that is, redefining the who, what, and how of effective teaching and learning.

This is a fundamental redefinition of how to achieve quality teaching and learning and significant student achievement. In order to carry out this reform, DoE and organizational partners must work to redefine roles, expectations, assumptions, and educational structures and processes. Ultimately, if partnership proves to be a sound strategy for reform and if it is to have "legs," then such work of redefinition must occur for many groups—DoE educators, organizational staffs, and New Visions and other support organizations, but also including students, parents, neighboring communities, school system and municipal administrators, organizational board members, policymakers, journalists, and funders. This reframing, an essential aspect of thoroughgoing reform, sheds light on the reach of NCHS reforms to effect change in multiple arenas and the issues of scope and sustainability.

Partnership and Multiple Arenas of Transformation

The New Century partnership strategy is a means for melding reform of teaching practices with reform of the organizational structures that shape schools. This is critical when one considers the history of school reform efforts in the United States. Michael Katz points out, for example, that reform efforts tend to focus on "alter[ing] the behavior of professionals without doing very much about the structures in which they work, or… [on] concentrat[ing] on structural reforms with little attention to the interests of the professionals who work within the system."[27] In a more recent analysis, Charles Payne, in a draft of his book on educational reform, critiques the "too much, too fast"[28] spread of educational reform efforts when little is known about effective implementation and the rapidity of ramping up efforts undercuts the ability to learn from and refine implementation strategies. For this paper, however, it is his analysis of two major contemporary reform movements—whole school reform and the standards-based movement—that is particularly apt. Payne highlights, with specific examples, the tendency of reform efforts to focus on changing teaching and learning without similar and simultaneous attention to organizational reform of school-level structures and processes that facilitate and promote change, especially in terms of governance, communications, inclusion, decision-making, leadership development, and so forth. According to

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27 Michael B Katz, *Improving Poor People: The Welfare State, the 'Underclass,' and Urban Schools as History,* Princeton University Press, 1995, pg. 122.

28 Charles Payne says, for example, "From Memphis to New Jersey, from New American Schools to standards-based education, perhaps the safest generalization one can make about urban schools or school districts is that most of them are trying to do too much too fast, initiating programs on the basis of what's needed rather than on the basis of what they are capable of." From Charles Payne, June 2004 draft manuscript of "Missing the Inner Intent: The Predictable Failures of Implementation," chapter 5 from his book in process *So Much Reform, So Little Change*, p. 34.

Payne, even more significant is the critical absence of the necessary social capital to enable the practice of deep reforms in these areas. [29]

Here, the partnership strategy provides a means for addressing reforms geared toward changes in *both* professional behavior and organizational structure. With the mandate for integrated partnership work across all school arenas, the strategy provides the means to create both kinds of change. Practicing partnerships themselves reflect such efforts, ranging from the co-leadership model of a few partnerships and schools, to organizational responsibility for aspects of a school's academic and youth development work, to organizational participation in student and teacher recruitment, committee work, and discussions about space, schedules, and school events, to alterations that reframe the meaning of programs and allow academic credit for co-developed and co-taught courses.

Partnership and Sustainability of Reform

Cynthia Coburn's seminal article "Rethinking Scale: Moving Beyond Numbers to Deep and Lasting Change," provides a useful perspective on the evolving practice of the New Century partnerships.[30] Focusing particularly on reforming pedagogic policy and practice, she argues that moving a reform effort to scale entails much more than multiplying sites for change. In her analysis, a meaningful conception of scale must encompass the following elements:

- ***Depth:*** Deep change in practice and policy that reflects the principles of reform, instead of "graft[ing] new approaches on top of existing practices without altering… norms or routines."
- ***Sustainability***: Recognition that a reform can achieve meaningful scale only if the changes are sustainable over time.
- ***Spread:*** Diffusion of underlying norms and principles—essentially, of habits of mind, expectations, and perspectives—within and across classrooms, schools, and districts.
- ***Shift in reform ownership:*** "[S]hift in knowledge of and authority for the reform" from external reformers to "reform-centered decision making" by

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[29] In Payne's analysis, the whole school reform movement covers a broad range of emphases. These include, among the more than 40 models of whole school reform: Accelerated Schools Program (high expectations, instead of remedial education, is the solution for at-risk students); Core Knowledge (at each grade level, children must master specific information); Expeditionary Learning (effective education means "long-term projects that combine academic learning, service learning, and physical learning in an egalitarian and collaborative school culture"); School Development Program or Comer approach (a focus on "the dysfunctional social climate in schools and on child development broadly"); and Success for All ("a prescriptive approach to literacy"). Standards-based reform, on the other hand, is "systemic" in the sense that the impetus is housed at the state level, where high standards for curricula are set. In addition, states: develop assessment measures for student performance; allow schools the flexibility to promote high performance through "change[s in] curricul[a], instruction, and school organization"; and hold schools accountable for student achievement.

[30] See Cynthia Coburn, "Rethinking Scale: Moving Beyond Numbers to Deep and Lasting Change," *Educational Researcher,* vol. 32, no. 6, August/September 2003, pp. 3-12.

teachers, schools, district administrators—and, in New Century schools, organizational partners. An internalization of reform principles by actors at all levels of the school system.

A central theme running throughout the analysis is the need for actors to "rethink and reconstruct their beliefs." Such rethinking and ultimate absorption of reform assumptions and expectations provide actors with the platform to create, re-create, and extend the reform principles. This theme provides a particularly apt view of the partnership strategy, which demands a rethinking and reconstruction of the meaning and practice of high school education.

Further, when practiced, the partnership strategy vigorously pushes such rethinking. The strategy posits a new actor and new role in the school: the organization as a full and integrated partner sharing responsibility and accountability for the creation and ongoing development of the school, and more, for the achievement of students. In this way, the strategy essentially embeds an engine of reform in the structure of the school. Moreover, the initiative assumes the ongoing presence of the organization and a continuous refreshing of the reform as DoE and organizational staffs reflect on and refine practice.

Growing Supports for Partnership. The conclusion of the first partnership paper includes a reference to the growing respect among some DoE regional staff members for the partnership strategy and its practice. By the third year of implementation, some regional superintendents had begun instituting their own supports for partnering organizations. Such supports further the legitimization of partnerships, sanction the place of partnering organizations at the heart of schools' mission, and, for the organizations, help establish personal links with the regional superintendent and create a vehicle for organizational partners to meet together. For example, in early summer 2004, the Regional Superintendent in Region 6 hosted a breakfast meeting with organizational partners involved in New Century schools within her administrative purview. The meeting, without partnering principals, gave the superintendent and organizational staffs the opportunity to meet, discuss planned endeavors within the schools, and go over issues on the minds of organizational partners. In early 2005, the superintendent hosted a follow-up meeting with the organizations. Superintendents in Regions 2 and 9 also hosted breakfast meetings with organizational partners working within their districts. In each case, the superintendents' words of welcome highlighted the importance of organizations' work in the schools. In spring 2005, the Superintendent in Region 1 sponsored a conference for principals and organizational partners that focused on aligning school-day and out-of-school educational efforts. In another example, the Superintendent in Region 4 instituted bi-monthly meetings during the 2004-05 school year to bring principals and organizational staff together around the

challenge of drawing on and embedding organizations in the academic endeavors of their schools.

The presence of organizational partners in schools opens the way for innovation across broadened opportunities for students, faculties, administrators, families, and organizational staff. Not all opportunities in all schools, of course—but the evolution of roles, tasks, responsibilities, and prerogatives has begun in the initiative. The dialectical dynamic mentioned in the first partnership paper—between conception, practice, and support, between the theoretical shape of partnership and the many ways the strategy is being played out on the ground—has moved to a deeper level over time.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Table 1: Variation in Location of the 75 NC High Schools, Fall 2004*

Borough	In Large High School	In Elementary/ Middle School	In Another Small School	Free Standing	In College
Bronx	35	5	2	0	1
Brooklyn	17	4	0	1	0
Manhattan	6	1	1	2	0
INITIATIVE TOTALS	58	10	3	3	1

* All of the site headings indicate school locations in a building. Headings are not meant to imply any relationship with, for example, the co-located large high school or college, other than the sharing of space. Free standing schools are not co-located with another school; two are in office buildings and one is in an independent building that was created as a school by the organizational partner.

APPENDIX B

New Visions for Public Schools
New Century High Schools Initiative
Ten Characteristics of Effective High Schools

1 **Rigorous Instructional Program** that enables every student to master challenging content, skills and learning strategies and meet or exceed state standards through in-depth courses of study and inquiry-based teaching and learning relevant to the concerns of adolescents and based on individual learning needs.

2 **Personalized Relationships** characterized by staff knowledge about each student's social and family conditions, strengths, aspirations and needs and by each student enjoying a close continuous relationship with one or more adults in the school community. Each student should have at least one adult who helps coordinate the support needed by the student throughout the high school years to prepare for higher education, employment or other productive postsecondary plans.

3 **Clear Focus and Expectations** through a school culture focused on high expectations for both students and staff, a shared vision of teaching and learning, a clear and articulated mission and curriculum, and the other common values and commitment of the entire school community to ensure success for every student.

4 **Instructional Leadership** characterized by a school-wide focus on student achievement; support for the improvement and enhancement of the school culture, teaching, and learning; and effective collaboration among school leaders, teachers, parents, students and partners in the community. The school leader(s) must demonstrate and build among the school community an unwavering commitment to fulfilling the shared vision of the school.

5 **School-based Professional Development and Collaboration** through teacher-driven opportunities for continuous assessment, reflection and improvement of teaching and learning by the entire school community. Professional development that will yield ongoing improvements in student learning is results-driven, standards-based and embedded in the daily work of the school.

6 **Meaningful Continuous Assessment of Student Learning** by both teachers and students through a variety of opportunities, including diagnostic and mandated tests, for students to demonstrate that they have met standards and can apply their learning. Teachers use assessments as diagnostic tools to identify student needs and improve instruction.

7 **Partnerships with Community Organizations and/or other Organizations** that are actively involved in the process of planning, operating and supporting the school. These partnerships should be integrated into the school and should be based on the strengths and capacity of the partnering organizations to enhance and support the teaching and learning environment and offer support services and opportunities to students, their families and the school community.

8 **Family/Caregiver Engagement and Involvement** in the design of the school and its educational program, including school governance. Parents, families and other caregivers must be welcomed as full partners in school decisions that affect children and families through regular, two-way, meaningful communication and the development of extended learning opportunities that foster active parent participation in student learning, in and out of school.

9 **Student Participation and Youth Development** characterized by the influence of "student voice" in classroom teaching and learning, the engagement of students in their own learning, and significant student responsibility in the operation and governance of the school.

10 **Effective Uses of Technology and Information Resources,** including print, visual, and audio materials and tools for use by students and teachers in teaching and learning, equitable access to electronic resources, articulated instruction in information literacy skills, and technology as a subject of study.

APPENDIX C

New Visions for Public Schools Characteristics of Lead and Collaborating Partners in the New Century High Schools

Lead Partners

Partners in the New Century High Schools Initiative play increasingly diverse and important roles. While each New Century high school has its own identity, they all combine rigorous academic programs with innovative teaching, personalized learning environments and deep ties to the local community. Each school is a collaborative effort between educators and partner organizations, who work together on every aspect of the school's design and operation.

Lead partners in the New Century High Schools Initiative take on a new role in schools as their work is integrated into the life of the school on multiple levels in order to impact student development and outcomes. This calls for a paradigm shift for both the Department of Education and lead partner staff as lead partners are no longer simply providing supplementary services in schools.

This guide has been developed to help you decide if the role of lead partner is the right one for your organization. We encourage organizations that are not able to commit to the role of lead partner, or for-profit organizations that want to contribute to New Century high schools, to consider becoming collaborating partners (Please see *Characteristics of Collaborating Partners*).

Though challenging and time consuming, the role of lead partner can be extremely rewarding for an organization. Lead partners have the opportunity to do more than just offer services: they participate in a collaborative effort that is fundamentally changing the lives of thousands of students. Lead partners participate in a highly recognized national education reform movement and formally manage a limited four year grant on behalf of the school that partially pays for their involvement and support of the school. Lead partner organizations have found that the role allows them to build on their strengths as an organization, has provided opportunities for collaborating both within and outside their organizations, and has allowed them to enhance their mission.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF LEAD PARTNERS

- Manage grant funds on behalf of the school for four years
- Maintain accounting records of funds
- Work with schools in budget development
- Participate in school planning and implementation
- Share in the accountability of school outcomes

ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS

- 501(c)(3) organization
- Financially sound
- Audited annually
- Experience in managing public and private grant funds and the capacity to dispense those funds regularly and flexibly to accommodate the needs of a new school
- A commitment to youth, education, and positive student outcomes
- Ability to dedicate/assign staff to be active participants in the planning and implementation of the school
- Expertise that can significantly contribute to teaching, learning and student support in the school

CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL LEAD PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Ability to offer resources and expertise that make a significant contribution to student learning, development and post secondary school preparation:

Lead partners function in many different ways and offer many types of resources to contribute to the school's mission. Focusing on integration into various aspects of the school, the lead partners contribute to curriculum development, professional development, program development, extended day opportunities, school governance and student support services. Successful partners have the resources to make a tangible and significant contribution to students and are committed to providing those resources. Lead partners have a long term investment in the school, even after the initial grant expires.

A connection to the community:

Lead partners often have long-term relationships in particular communities and are trusted by people in that community. They know the issues that are important to the community and are able to engage community members, particularly parents, in activities designed to strengthen the school and forge relationships between the school and its surrounding communities.

Commitment to youth development:
Successful partnerships emphasize positive youth development as a central goal and work to provide the programs and environments that support it. Youth development is best facilitated when organizations focus on young people's strengths and assets. Research has shown that programs effectively promote youth development when they provide meaningful and engaging opportunities for young people to participate in activities that influence the world around them, provide consistent, affirming and ongoing relationships, physical and psychological safety, high standards and expectations, and guidance and affirmation.

Commitment to partnership planning and implementation:
School partnerships require a long term commitment from all parties involved, and lead partners should be prepared to dedicate significant amounts of staff time to the school partnership. School planning teams meet at least weekly during the planning phase of the school and the most successful lead partners provide an on site staff person that serves as a liaison between the school and the organization. Many lead partners provide several full and part-time staff members at the school.

A strong commitment to providing resources and working with the school to raise funds:
Successful partners are committed to providing human, economic, and material resources to the school. The four year New Century grant supports some aspects of the partner's involvement with the school. However, partners are responsible for fundraising for school partnership programs after the initial grant, in partnership with the school, and lead partners are most successful when they are committed to raising additional funds.

Collaborating Partners

Community partners are an integral part of the New Century high schools. Among other functions, they open schools to the larger community, enhance school learning, and offer needed services and expertise. Each New Century high school has a lead partner organization that participates actively in the daily activities of the school, manages school grant funds, and makes a financial and programmatic commitment to the school. Along with a lead partner, the schools have one or more collaborating partners that also support and enhance the mission of the school. Both types of partnerships offer organizations the opportunity to become involved in a nationally recognized reform effort that is transforming urban high schools. Partners are given the opportunity to make a substantial impact in the lives of young people, one that goes well beyond offering a discrete service or program.

Collaborating partners enter into agreements with schools to provide specific resources, programs, and services to students. Collaborating partners are key players in supporting student development and achievement. Collaborating partners can

be nonprofit or for-profit organizations, and several businesses have had valuable partnerships with schools. They can take advantage of initiative funds to support their partnerships and they often participate in the school planning process to create schools.

In the first year of the New Century High Schools Initiative, a diverse collection of organizations partnered with small schools. In the past year, all of the collaborating partnerships we have observed have at least one of the characteristics listed in this document and most have several. One element that is consistent throughout all of the successful partnerships is that the relationship is built on the strengths of both the school and the organization and both benefit due to the partnership.

IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF COLLABORATING PARTNERS

Ability to draw on the skills and knowledge of staff members within the organization to enrich learning at the school:

Collaborating partners' staff members often enhance the school curriculum with their skills and knowledge. Students are able to tie what they are learning in their classes to the world outside of the school. For example, at one New Century high school, a major medical institution enhances a New Century high school's science curriculum through frequent visits by its medical staff and guided tours of its medical facilities. Through the partnership students learn about medical science from experts in the field.

Capacity to offer resources to the school:

Along with staff, collaborating partners also offer other types of resources to schools to improve the learning environments of the New Century high schools. This may mean simply offering a physical space which the school can use for performances, donations of materials to support the curriculum, or guided tours at cultural institutions.

A strong connection to the community:

Many collaborating partner organizations are organizations that have strong connections to their communities. They have long standing relationships with the community and knowledge of the issues and people that affect it. These partners help connect schools to their local communities, allowing students to become more involved in—and to develop a sense of pride and connection to—the place they live. At one school, students partner with a local CBO that is engaged in local environmental advocacy. Through the partnership, students participate in an environmental study of their community, learning about environmental science and about the environmental issues that are affecting them and their community.

Ability to prepare students for future careers:
Collaborating partners often draw on their expertise in their field to prepare students for future employment opportunities. One school's lead partner connects the school to several collaborating partner organizations within the sports industry. These organizations, including professional teams and sport management companies, offer students career mentoring and internships.

Ability to offer needed services to students:
Students in the communities served by New Century high schools sometimes go without important services, especially health care. Collaborating partners often work to fill this gap. At a Brooklyn high school, a health organization offers medical services to students through their mobile van. Other collaborating partners offer counseling and mentoring.

Ability to assist schools in developing a college culture in the school:
New Century high schools often collaborate with institutions of higher learning to prepare students for post-secondary school opportunities. One school in the Bronx has taken advantage of relationships with colleges to provide college visits for nearly all of its students. They have used these partnerships to develop a strong college culture in the school beginning in the 9th grade, where students are aware of the benefits of college and what they have to do to prepare themselves.

APPENDIX D

NEW CENTURY HIGH SCHOOLS INITIATIVE TIMELINE

	2002 Schools	2003 Schools	2004 Schools
2001	NV distributed the RFP to approx. 3,200 stakeholders (March) NV staff met w/ Bronx supt. to strategize around systemic issues; Bronx prof. development begins (March) Orientation session w/ 110 potential applicants in attendance (April) Planning retreat (May) Planning grant applications due (June) Meetings about forming strong partnerships held (Oct-Nov)		
2002	NV work to clarify "partnership" through use of memo of understanding between DoE and partners (early) Implementation Grant Proposal Due (March) NV shifts emphasis of partnership integration to effective student education instead of school creation (May-July) Summer institute (July) **2002 NCHS programs/schools open (September)**	Meetings with Brooklyn Core Team to develop District's planning proposal begin (July) Brooklyn District Planning Grant Proposal Due (August) Brooklyn Superintendency & NV begin recruiting potential school and organizational partners (September) NV and Brooklyn Office of New Small Schools hold orientation sessions for more than 40 organizations (October) Weekly prof. development meetings for school members begin (October) Concept Papers Due (November)	
2003	2002 NCHS open w/ 9th and 10th grade (September)	Implementation Grant Proposal Due (March) 2003 NCHS Summer Institute (July) **2003 NCHS open (September)**	Outreach and orientation meetings w/potential organizational and educational partners (August) 3-month series of weekly prof. development sessions on school creation begins (September) Concept papers due (November)
2004	2002 NCHS open w/ 9th, 10th, and 11th grades (September)	2003 NCHS open w/ 9th and 10th grades (September)	Implementation Grant Proposals Due (February) 2004 NCHS Summer Institute (June) **2004 NCHS open (September)**

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Janice M. Hirota, author of these papers, has extensive fieldwork experience in urban America. She has studied homeless populations in New York City; urban poor in cities around the nation; municipal and non-profit social service and criminal justice personnel; mass media professionals; and political and community activists. Currently, her work focuses on efforts to create systemic reform in public education in urban and rural centers around the country. She has a doctorate in anthropology from Columbia University.

Youth Development Institute at the Fund for the City of New York, created in 1991, works to ensure that youth policies, practices, and programs at all levels of government and in all funding streams reflect a positive model of youth development. At the core of YDI's vision is the integration of family, school, and community to create a consistent and continuous system of support in young people's lives. In its work with high schools, YDI integrates youth development concepts and practices into school settings.

New Visions for Public Schools, founded in 1989, is the largest education reform organization dedicated to improving the quality of education children receive in New York City's public schools. Working with the public and private sectors, New Visions develops programs and policies to energize teaching and learning and to raise the level of student achievement.

Carnegie Corporation of New York was created by Andrew Carnegie in 1911 to promote "the advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding." Under Carnegie's will, grants must benefit the people of the United States, although up to 7.4 percent of the funds may be used for the same purpose in countries that are or have been members of the British Commonwealth, with a current emphasis on Commonwealth Africa. As a grantmaking foundation, the Corporation seeks to carry out Carnegie's vision of philanthropy, which he said should aim "to do real and permanent good in this world."

For more information about the Fund for the City of New York/Youth Development Institute, contact Peter Kleinbard, Vice President and Director, the Youth Development Institute, 121 Sixth Avenue, New York, New York 10013 or see www.fcny.org

For more information about New Visions for Public Schools and the New Century High Schools Initiative, contact Jennie Soler-McIntosh, Director, New Century High School Partnerships or Gloria Rakovic, Director, Secondary Education, New Visions for Public Schools, 320 West 13th Street, 6th Floor, New York, New York 10014
or see www.newvisions.org

For more information about Carnegie Corporation of New York, see www.carnegie.org

Youth Development Institute | Fund for the City of New York
121 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10013
212.925.6675
www.fcny.org

New Visions for Public Schools
320 West 13th Street, 6th floor
New York, NY 10014
212.645.5110
www.newvisions.org